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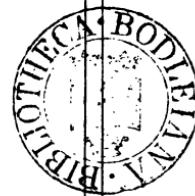
James Comerford
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G. Parfet

HISTORY
OF THE
BOROUGH AND FOREIGN
OF
WALSALL,
IN THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD ;
WITH AN
INTERESTING TOUR OF INSPECTION,
INCLUDING
A faithful Report
OF THE
GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO THE CHARITIES
AT THE GUILDHALL, WALSALL, JUNE, 1855,
BEFORE THOMAS HARE, ESQ.,
COMPARED WITH THE FORMER INQUISITION, A.D. 1823.
BY E. L. GLEW.

"How despotic might authorities become, were there no local censors to notice their fancies and their freaks. All our PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOULD BE ACCURATELY REPORTED. When fools talk, let us hear their folly, that for the future we may be aware of them and condemn them to the silence of private life. If wise men speak, let us have every word, 'for the lips of the wise dispense knowledge.' LET OUR PUBLIC LIFE BE THOROUGHLY PUBLIC, THEN WILL HONEST MEN REJOICE, AND JOBBERS AND KNAVES SHUN THE LIGHT THAT SUITS NOT THE CHARACTER OF THEIR DEEDS."—*Birmingham Daily Press*—"FIRST WORDS."

WALSALL:
J. R. ROBINSON, THE BRIDGE.
1856.



J. R. ROBINSON, PRINTER, THE BRIDGE, WALSALL.

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ERRATA.

PAGE 20—Line three from the bottom, for “£20,000,” read £17,286 6s. 6d., and in line following, for “£500,” read £2,000,—vide “Account of money expended in the rebuilding of Walsall Parish Church,” in *Additional Notes* at the end of the volume.

- „ 24—Line two, for “thirty marks,” read *thirteen marks*.
- „ 30—Line ten from the bottom, for “Beyford,” read *Brayford*.
- „ 36—Line thirteen from the bottom, for “1773,” read, 1733.
- „ 42—Last line, for “10s. 6d.,” read *7s. 6d.*
- „ 46—in note, for “William Harris,” read *J. R. Robinson*.
- „ 56—Line four from the bottom, for “1847,” read 1845.
- „ 61—Amongst the officers to the Union, should have been included:—
Messrs. F. P. Palmer, D. S. Moore, G. H. Whimper, and
H. W. Hare, Surgeons.
- „ 76—Line ten, for “is now vested in the vicar of Walsall, though the inhabitants formerly claimed the advowson,” read *is now claimed by the vicar of Walsall, as well as the inhabitants, who have frequently exercised the advowson*.
- „ 89—Line thirteen, for “Charles Stewart,” read *Charles Stuart*.
- „ 97—Line six for “1060,” read 1660.
- „ 161—Line ten from the bottom, for “were invested,” read *was invested*, and in line twelve, for “were now lying,” read *was now lying*.

P R E F A C E.

Accuracy of detail and boldness in the assertion of truth, marking diligently what is just or unjust, wise or rash, honorable or ignoble, philanthropic or uncharitable, liberal or despotic ; and above all, steering clear of flattery and prejudice—are (it will freely be admitted) the most essential qualifications of a historian. Such, then, are the principles on which the author has endeavoured (however unskilfully) to rear the structure of his present work. Is it necessary to add more ? Probably so, for—

.... “ Sometimes,—when unknown folk surround you,
To whom you are unknown, 'tis fair to mention
Your claims to worth, that they may not confound you
With vulgar men, but show you due attention.”

Besides, the remark may naturally arise, “ assertion is no proof; ” a few reasons, therefore, by way of attestation, may be deemed not only excusable, but necessary, especially when it is borne in mind that the individual who assumes the important (though perhaps thankless) task of surveying, reporting, and canvassing, local affairs, is comparatively a stranger to the town and people of which, and whom, he treats ; a fact withal which gives him rather an advantage than otherwise over a native, inasmuch as he is more certain to scan surrounding objects with an unprejudiced eye, and portray them with the same unbiased feeling as the painter would transfer them to canvass.

The original intention was merely to give an accurate report of the recent “ Inquiry into the public charities,” which occupied the attention of Thomas Hare, Esq., the Government

Inspector, for five days, and was attended throughout by the author of these pages, who each day furnished a condensed report of the proceedings for the columns of a local paper.

Encouraged by the solicitations and assurances of several friends, the writer resolved on offering a more extended report in the form of a pamphlet, but it was afterwards suggested that a sketch of the "History and Antiquities of Walsall" should be appended, and accordingly an announcement to that effect was issued; on more mature consideration, however, it was found expedient not only to render the *Historical division* as comprehensive as possible, but also to bestow upon it the most prominent place, in order that the true nature and position of the "Charities" might be better understood.

With regard to the "*Ancient History and Public Charities of Walsall*" no pains have been spared to acquire the most authentic information, old records have been ferreted from their dusty hiding places, and the best authorities extant have been carefully consulted and compared. For many of those important auxiliaries the author is indebted to the Mayor (F. B. Oerton, Esq.,) and Samuel Wilkinson, jun., Esq., the Town Clerk, to whom he takes this opportunity of tendering his acknowledgments, as well as to other gentlemen, from whom were received the like favours.

Few can form an adequate conception of the drudgery attendant on reducing to a little world of order, the somewhat chaotic mass of abundant and valuable elements, necessary to the construction of a work like the present, and to make, when reduced, such additions and deductions as would render them fertile in beneficial results. It is to be hoped, therefore, that those who criticise will in "justice remember mercy;" and as the author is not vain enough to lay claim to "infallibility," he humbly trusts that the "will may be taken for the deed;" and any slight errors into which he may have unconsciously fallen, may be counterbalanced by the recollection, that he has

throughout the undertaking been influenced only by a desire to contribute a mite to the public weal, and however he may have failed in the attempt, he has at all events done his best.

The modern division comprises *a survey of Walsall in the present day*. Places of Worship, Public Institutions, and all "matters of local interest" (have during a tour of inspection) been sketched with caution, and tinted with delicacy, due attention having been paid to the proper adjustment of light and shade, and care having been taken neither to exaggerate, extenuate, or "set aught down in malice," but to present with Pre-Raphaelite minuteness things not as they appear, but as they really are; the intention being to hand down to posterity as faithful a picture as possible, of a locality where the author has received many kindnesses and passed many happy days; and in which, next to "his own his native land," viz., "poor ould Ireland," he feels the liveliest interest.

The *Inquiry into the Charities* was conducted in a colloquial fashion, seldom confined to any particular charity: witnesses were examined so as to suit their own convenience, and the proceedings altogether were of so discursive a character, that without the privilege of reference to the Inspector's notes, (of which the writer was enabled to avail himself), it would have been a matter of considerable difficulty—in fact, an impossibility—to place before the public a faithful and intelligible report of the important facts elicited. In answer to some remarks made on this peculiar mode of procedure, the Inspector replied, that the nature of the inquiry rendered such a course inevitable. Be that as it may, the author feels that he would be guilty of great injustice, were he not to acknowledge the courteous manner in which that gentleman rendered him every possible assistance, in acquiring a correct knowledge of the proceedings, not only by allowing access to his notes, but also by his willingness at all times to answer any question, or clear

up any point, on which might exist the least miscomprehension.

Every effort has been made to render this report of an interesting character, not only accurate in detail, but concise in form; the intention not being to swell a volume with superfluous and unimportant matter, but simply to submit to public view the gist of the disclosures made and evidence adduced, reserving, however, the privilege of making such deductions, and offering such comments, as any particular matter in question might call forth, always taking care that those deductions should be made with the strictest impartiality, and no comments offered that might tend to tinge the report with prejudice or sectarianism.

E. L. G.

WALSALL, August, 1855.

HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF WALSALL.

PART I.

GENERAL OUTLINE—A PEEP AT ANCIENT WALSALL— ITS PROGRESS TO MODERN IMPROVEMENT.

THE basis of commerce is mutual exchange of produce, from which emanates all sources of employment; and history fully illustrates the indispensability of one nation's interdependance on another. In contemplating these great truths, it seems impossible for the most sceptical to fail in recognising the hand of an all-wise and infinite Providence; so strikingly manifested is the peculiar and admirable distribution of nature's gifts on various countries, and all, so beautifully and skilfully arranged for the mutual benefit of mankind.

Every portion of the southern division of Staffordshire, (more particularly the town and neighbourhood immediately under consideration) seems to have been blessed with a Benjamin's portion of these local advantages, in reference to which we find in Pearce's Directory of Walsall, published in 1813, the following remarks:—"The numerous and extensive mines of coal, limestone, iron ore, clay, &c., which may be called the parents of trade and manufactures, are found here of the best qualities and in the greatest abundance: they have

been the means of producing the many iron furnaces, forges, and foundries, which have, for a succession of years, performed their ponderous task, converting the inestimable bowels of the earth into a source of employment for thousands of ingenious artists, and in such a wonderful variety of manufacture, that to detail them would fill a volume."

How many volumes would this gigantic hive of industry furnish in the present day? This is a question it is apprehended few would attempt to answer.

Walsall, (formerly written *Walshall*,* *Walshale*, and *Waleshill*,) is an ancient *borough* and *municipality*, and an admirably well-built and thriving *market town*, situate in the South Hundred of Offlow, on the south-east borders of the county, in the diocese of Lichfield, and archdeaconry of Stafford, six miles east of Wolverhampton, eight north-west of Birmingham, nine south-west of Lichfield, eighteen south-east by south of Stafford, 119 north-west of London, and 87 south-east of Liverpool; and justly ranks as the second manufacturing town in the county.

The greater part of the ancient portion of the town stands on the crown and declivities of a bold cliff of limestone, and part on a tributary stream to the rivers Tame and Trent.

Surrounded by the smoke of a large manufacturing vicinity, Walsall has been often looked upon with a sort of contempt by her more portly neighbour Birmingham, but surely without just cause; for, it is not only a well attested fact, that, two centuries ago, the former was a place of much greater importance, Birmingham being then described as "a hamlet near Walsall," but also that its lords have been some of the most eminent men in the kingdom.

Within the last twenty-five years considerable improvements have taken place, and Walsall has, to a wonderful extent, increased in size, commerce, and population; many new streets have been formed, and old ones rendered more in keeping with modern taste and comfort: handsome houses, villas, and public

* From the many places adjacent to each other in this part of the county which terminate in "hall," as Pelshall, Rushall, Willenhall, &c., it is but reasonable to suppose (with Dr Oliver) that this was a favourite locality of the Saxon Thanes, some of whom had their mansions and courts at each of these towns, where they maintained a rude baronial estate.

edifices, have sprung up on all sides, representing the Grecian, Corinthian, Doric, and other styles of architecture; and *beauty* and *elegance*, shorn of their ancient pride and prejudices, are now seen gracefully co-mingling in joyous companionship with *free trade* and *honest industry*.

Walsall gives name to a poor law union, a rural deanery, and a county court and polling district, in the Southern Parliamentary division of Staffordshire. The parish is in two townships, called the *Borough* and *Foreign*, the former containing about 100 acres, and the latter 7,782 acres, and in 1801 had only 10,399 inhabitants ; in 1821, its population had increased to 11,914 ; in 1831, to 15,064 ; in 1841, to 20,852 and in 1851, to 26,816 *—of whom 8,760 were in the Borough, and 18,056 in the Foreign.

Walsall Union comprises eight townships, viz., the Borough and Foreign, with the parishes of Aldridge, Great Barr, Bentley, Darlaston, Pelsall and Rushall; and in 1851 contained 43,038 inhabitants. The *Municipal Borough* comprises the whole parish, which is divided into three wards. The *Parliamentary Borough* embraces all, except a detached portion of the *Foreign*, viz., Walsall Wood and Shelfield. The extraordinary increase of the population is attributable to the prosperity of the staple manufactures of the town, and to the opening of several coal, iron, and limestone mines in the locality. Walsall is assessed to the property tax at £61,143. The Earl of Bradford is lord of the manor, but a portion of the soil belongs to Lord Hatherton, John Crowther, Esq., (proprietor of Goscote,) and other freeholders, as well as many copyholders, who hold by a nominal tenure, paying only a few pence annually to the lord, and thus have in some respects a superior advantage to freeholders, inasmuch as they can sell their estates without any restriction as it respects dower, and without the expense of suing for fines in the superior courts of London.

Erdeswick, in his survey of Staffordshire, p. 147, assumes, that the manor of *Walshale*, was held by *William Fitz Aculf*, in the 20th of William the Conqueror. Shaw, however, (a learned and indefatiguable historian and antiquarian of this county,) as

* The present population may be estimated at about 30,000.

well as other authorities, doubt the accuracy of this information, there being no mention of it in Doomsday Book, which, he argues, "seems a singular omission, when most of the inferior manors round it are amply noticed."* The next account of it is found in the reign of Henry II, when that king by his charter, dated at Stanton, "gave Walshale, with all its appurtenances, to his servant Herbert Rufus, and his heirs, reserving to himself a rent of £4 per annum for all services, &c."† In the time of Henry III it was held in fee-farm of the king, at the yearly rent of £26 19s. 9d., by William Rufus, who granted certain privileges to the burgesses of Walsall;‡ and from him it passed to Sir Roger de Mortein, joint lord of the manor with Sir Thomas le Rous, Knt.;|| thence to Sir Ralph Bassett, of Drayton; from whom it descended to Henry Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, surnamed "the king maker,"§ and who was slain at the battle of Barnet, 1471, by King Edward IV; after which, his corpse having been carried to London, with that of the Marquis of Montague, (his brother,) and there exposed to public view in St. Paul's, was thence conveyed to Bisham, in Berkshire, and interred in the monastery, with his ancestors the Montacutees, by whom it had been founded. Henry VIII, in the 32nd year of his reign, granted this manor to the unfortunate John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who held it till the reign of Queen Mary, when, being attainted of high treason, for an attempt to establish his daughter-in-law, the Lady Jane Grey, on the throne of England, the manor was seized, and granted to Richard Wilbraham, Esq., in consideration of £1000. The grandson of the said Richard was created a baronet by James I, and the manor remained in his family till it was carried by one, of two co-heiresses, to an ancestor of its present lord, the Right Hon. George Augustus Frederick Henry Bridgeman, Earl of Bradford. The Earl was born in 1789, and is consequently in his 66th year, he succeeded to the earldom, &c.,

* Shaw's Antiquities of Walsall, page 2.

† Huntbach's MSS., No. 2. 36. Penes me, and Cartular' de Walsall, page 12.

‡ See Charter of the Corporation, &c., published by Smart of Wolverhampton, 1774.

|| Huntbach's MSS.

‡ Chartulary in British Museum, page 3.

in 1825. His seats are at Weston Hall, Shropshire, and Castle Bromwich, Warwickshire.

The soil of Walsall is of a retentive nature, with a clayey substratum; and about a mile from the town, in the Wolverhampton road, is a strong chalybeate water, called Alum Well, which was formerly a place of much resort, but has of late years fallen into disuse.

The staple manufactures of Walsall are bits, spurs, stirrups, chains, curbs, &c., plated and other mountings, bridles, saddles, harness, collars, and every description of coachmakers' and saddlers' ironmongery; for which, whether as regards variety or excellence of workmanship, Walsall justly stands unrivalled. At one time shoe buckles and chapes formed the chief, by which a vast number of hands were employed, and not a few good fortunes realized. Those branches, as well as others, suffered great depression during the American and Peninsular campaigns, when thousands of buckles were allowed to slumber on their dusty shelves. This trade was subsequently ruined by the discarding of knee breeches in favour of trowsers, shoe-ties and Wellingtons. The manufacture of nails, locks, bolts, keys, pulleys, spectacles and other articles is likewise carried on to a considerable extent. There are a large number of brass and other foundries, and many extensive establishments for currying, dying, and polishing hides. Coal, iron, and lime works also abound in the parish, the latter of which are on the north-east side of the town, near Rushall. The limestone is found at a considerable depth, from eighty to ninety yards, and above the main bed (which is eleven yards thick) are several strata of ironstone. The Hayhead mines, about two miles east of Walsall, on the road leading to Sutton Coldfield, produce immense quantities of grey limestone, which, for adhesive qualities, strength, and durability, cannot be surpassed. It is much used for stuccoing buildings, and is remarkably good for cementing in water; it is, therefore, in great demand, for the purpose of constructing locks, bridges, aqueducts, &c.

In the limestone mines at Daw-end, within half a mile of Walsall, are caverns of immense extent, which lead to a large subterraneous lake, and known by the name of Lindley Caverns.

They are visited in the summer season by numerous pleasure parties, when they are sometimes brilliantly illuminated, producing a fairy scene of extraordinary splendour.

Dr. Plot, in his Natural History, takes notice of a very fine limestone that polishes like marble, which is found in the southern parts of this county, "and all about Walsall, particularly at Rushall."* With regard to iron-ore, also, he thus remarks:—"At Walsall and Rushall, they divide their ironstone into several sorts, such as black bothum, gray bothum, chatterpye (being of the colour of a magpie), gray measure, mush, and white measure. The two first are seldom made use of, they are so very poor; the two middle sorts are but indifferent; the two last, the principal; but mush, the best of all, being filled with a brisk, sweet liquor, which the workmen drink greedily, and so very rich an ore that they say it may be made into iron in a common forge." "The fourth and best sort of iron is called tough iron, of which they make all sorts of the best wares."

With regard to the sweet liquor alluded to, he states:—"It is frequently met with amongst the best sort of ironstone, called mush, in round or oval blackish and reddish stone, sometimes as big as the crown of a man's hat, hollow, and like a honeycomb, and holding a pint of this matter, which, according to the colour of the comb within (whatever the stone be without) is either red or white, and, whether the one or the other, of a sweet sharp taste, very cold and cutting, yet greedily drunk by the workmen."†

Amongst the iron works, those at Birchills, belonging to George Jones, Esq., deserve special notice. They yield about 20,000 tons of metal annually, and give constant employment to from 400 to 500 men. A great consumption of coal is here reduced, by means of the gases generated during the smelting process, being collected at the top of the furnace, from whence it descends through a pipe into the boiler fire, where they are consumed.

The town enjoys the possession of various modes of transit, by which its trade and commerce is greatly facilitated. In the immediate neighbourhood, on the north side, is a commodious station on the South Staffordshire Railway.‡ Another, about two miles south,

* Plot's Staffordshire, page 153.

+ Plot's Staffordshire, p. 159 and 161.

‡ A full description of this Line will be found in another page.

at Bescot Junction, where that line is crossed by the London and North-Western, and a small station at Rushall, two miles north of Walsall. Much benefit has also been derived from an extension of the Old Birmingham Canal, which passes on the western side and joins the Wyrley and Essington Canal, several branches of which intersect a large portion of the parish, and open a communication with all the canals and navigable rivers of this and the neighbouring counties.

Walsall was anciently a borough by prescription, but received charters from Edward III and Henry IV. The oldest existing charter was granted by Charles I, in the third year of his reign, and confirmed in the 13th Charles II. This charter declared the Borough and Foreign of Walsall to be "ancient demesne of the Crown of England, and the mayor and burgesses, and also all and singular the burgesses and inhabitants of the Borough or Town and Foreign of Walsall, by whatsoever name or names they should have been theretofore incorporated, or whether theretofore incorporated or not, and their successors, were incorporated by the name of the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, and empowered to purchase and take possession to themselves and their successors for ever, messuages, lands, tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, woods, underwoods, rectories, tythes, reversions, or other hereditaments whatsoever; so as the said messuages, lands, tenements, meadows, feedings, pastures, and other hereditaments, so by them to be had, held and received, should not exceed in the whole the clear yearly value of twenty pounds."

Previous to the Municipal Reform Act, in 1835, the corporation was composed of a mayor† and twenty-four capital burgesses, a recorder, town-clerk, two sergeants-at-mace, and a beadle. The mayor was elected from the body of capital burgesses, annually, on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. The mayor and senior capital burgesses, with the mayor of the past year, were justices of the peace, and held a weekly petty session, and also courts of general quarter session four times a year. The mayor, recorder, and town-clerk were likewise empowered by the charter to hold a court of record, for the recovery of debts and damages exceeding the sum of forty shillings, but not more than twenty pounds. It

+ The present mayor is F. B. Orton, Esq

also granted to the mayor and capital burgesses power to hold courts of "pye-powder" during the fairs, and receive the benefit of all tolls, stallage, fines, piccage, and amercements, arising therefrom. The mayor, burgesses and inhabitants were likewise declared "free, acquitted and discharged" from the payment of impost or toll, "in as ample form as the people of the manor of Walsall formerly were, and have been entitled to, by means, force, and virtue, of certain letters patent, dated at Westminster, the 8th day of July, in the 47th year of Edward III." The charter, moreover, provided against any claim therein contained, being "construed or interpreted to extend to the prejudice, derogation, interruption, or damage of any of the authorities, privileges, or profits belonging or appertaining to the lord of the manor of Walsall." A court leet and baron, with view of frank pledge, is held yearly in October by the lord of the manor's steward, when constables, &c., for the Borough and Foreign are appointed, and all persons owing suit and service to the lord, and neglecting to perform the same, are amerced fourpence each.

Under the Municipal Reform Act, Walsall is governed by a town council, consisting of a mayor, six aldermen, and eighteen councillors, with a commission of peace (comprising six justices, besides the mayor and ex-mayor), a recorder, town-clerk, and other officers. Quarter and petty sessions are still held for the borough, at the usual periods; but the court for the recovery of small debts has given place to the county court, which holds jurisdiction in the eight townships comprising the Walsall Union, and is held monthly at the "Dragon" Assembly Room, Guildhall.*

Under the same Act the borough is divided into three wards, viz., Bridge Ward, St. George's Ward, and Foreign Ward. In 1834, the old corporation held property producing £828 per annum; but in 1841, it amounted to £1222, when the income was £1282; of which £847 arose from rents. The total amount of debts left by the old corporation appear to have been £1006 16s. 11d., which was nothing extraordinary, when the following little example of expenditure, extracted from their own entries, is taken into consideration:—

* The present Judge of the County Court is N. R. Clarke Esq., recorder and sergeant-at-law.

MICHAELMAS, 1802.

"Paid John Dickinson, for entertainments at quarter sessions...	£	110	0	0
" for music, being fair day.....		7	0	
" Benjamin Barber, for sergeants' and beelman's cloaks ...		13	8	7
" for music, when elected mayor		10	6	
" Mr. Charles Perkins a bill for wine		110	10	6
" James Deykin, for carriage of wine		4	1	5
" Hill, Waldron & Co., for bottles.....		7	10	0"

The Reform Bill of 1832, gave Walsall the privilege of sending one representative to parliament; and, in December of that year, the borough first exercised its new elective franchise. There was a strong and boisterous contest, which ended in broken windows and broken heads, said to have been caused by a mob of "union-men" from Birmingham. The late Charles Smith Forster, Esq., a respectable banker and capital burgess, and father to the present member,* had the honour of being returned on that memorable occasion, and gave, throughout his official career, universal satisfaction.

Amongst other interesting documents preserved in the archives of the corporation is a deed bearing the seal and signature of Queen Elizabeth, dated 13th July, in the 28th year of her reign, and containing a grant of certain lands to the town. It is stated that the royal seal and signature was affixed at Walsall, by the Queen, during one of her tours; but, some affirm, whilst she was staying at the manor-house of Bescot, now known as Bescot Hall, the residence of Horatio Barnett, Esq., solicitor to the South Staffordshire Railway Company.

In 1643, Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I, also honoured the town with a short visit, and is said to have staid at a house, now, and for many years known as the "White Hart," Caldmore, previous to joining the king at Edge Hill. There are many curious deeds and seals in the town chest worthy the notice of the antiquary.

The seal of the corporation is not the same as the town arms, (*i.e.* the bear and ragged staff): it represents three *fleurs de lis*, and three lions quarterly, with two lions as supporters, and above the arms a crown without an arch. Over the rim of the crown are five

* Charles Forster, Esq., was returned M.P. for Walsall in 1852.

fleurs de lis, and no crosses (as customary when the crown of England is represented). The seal is nearly the size of a crown piece, with an inscription round it, in very ancient Latin characters; the translation is, "The seal of the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall." The seal must have been the arms of some of our monarchs from Henry V, to Elizabeth, inclusive. Kings Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV, all quartered the *fleurs de lis semeé*; and James I, quartered the Scotch lion. There is no date to the seal, but it is conjectured to be not more than 420 nor less than 230 years old.

It is recorded in the European Magazine, from a MS. in the possession of Dr. Birch,* that the first LORD SOMERS acquired his grammar learning here. This eminent lawyer was born on the 4th of March, 1650, at Worcester. His father was an attorney, who, under Cromwell, commanded a troop of horse. At the Restoration he was pardoned.

In 1675 young Somers was entered a commoner at Trinity College, Oxford. He took his degree of M.A. in 1681, having already entered at the Middle Temple.

While studying the law, he neglected not polite literature. Poetry and translations first made him known to the world, and his perseverance and good fortune were such, that at thirty he was an eminent counsel.

His principles were those of an honest liberal. He early connected himself with Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell, and used his pen with vigour against the tyranny of Charles II. These were anonymous—and consequently some have escaped posterity. In 1688 he acquired fresh note from defending the seven prelates who denied the dispensing power of James II. He then joined with ardour those who organised the revolution. Worcester sent him to the Convention Parliament; and at the conference between the two houses on the word "abdicated," he was manager for the House of Commons.

On the coming to the throne of King William, Mr. Somers was made Solicitor-General, May 9, 1689; Recorder of Gloucester, 1690; Attorney-General, 1692; and Lord-Keeper, 1693. He was knighted, and then made Baron Evesham and Lord Chancellor of

* Vol. XXIII. p. 4.

England. To support these dignities the king gave him the manors of Ryegate and Hewlegh, in Surrey, and a grant of £2,100 per annum out of the fee farm rents of the crown.

His popularity was now at its height. His connection, however, with the Partition Treaty about the Spanish Succession offended the Tory party, who attacked him with much virulence, and after a long contest, carried a vote of the House of Commons to impeach him. The Lords acquitted him. But Lord Somers retired into private life to Cheshunt, and devoted himself to study. He was once or twice called for by the claims of duty; but he finally outlived his understanding—some say from too great indulgence in one passion—and died, April 26, 1715.

The abilities of this great man were varied indeed, and as a politician he was an example to those around him. He was fond of learning, and did much to raise "Paradise Lost" in public opinion. That poem was buried in oblivion when he drew it forth. Mr. Cooksey tries to prove him the author of the "Tale of a Tub," and accuses him of being very loose in his morals; but this is an assertion not strongly supported. His acknowledged writings are good. In the Palace of Westminster there is a splendid statue to the memory of Lord Somers, who, as an honest lawyer and a patriot, eminently deserves to be thus handed down to posterity.

En passant, a slight sketch of two natives of the town, though of humbler origin, and more modern date, may not perhaps prove unacceptable. One has been rendered famous as the husband of that once celebrated tragic actress, Mrs. Siddons, whose portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence graces the walls of the National Gallery, and forms a picture which irresistibly leads the mind to imagine that reality, and not mere portraiture, is presented to the senses.

"The very life seems warm upon the lip;
The fixture of the eye hath motion in't."

Mr. Siddons was born in Rushall-street; his father, who kept a public-house, known by the sign of the "London Apprentice," met with his death by accident, in sparring or wrestling with one Denston. The subject of our sketch had been bred a barber, but seems to have early exhibited a taste for the stage. He at one time, with some others of his acquaintances, performed in a malt-house (now

occupied by Mr. Wood), on the Lime Pit Bank. He afterwards joined the itinerant company of the renowned Charles Kemble, and subsequently married that gentleman's highly gifted daughter, through whose abilities, and the favours of the public, he soon rose to affluence and distinction.

The other is an individual who, in the summer of 1796, caused considerable attraction at Sadler's Wells, and was known to a London audience by the name of Askins the ventriloquist. His real name was Thomas Haskey; his father was a chape filer, and used to ring the treble bell. Thomas was apprenticed to a bridle bit maker, at Bloxwich, but ran away from his master during the American war, and entered the King's service, in which he lost a leg, and was in consequence pensioned off. It is said, that when a boy he knew nothing of the surprising faculty of which he was possessed; but it has been supposed that he made himself master of it by imitating O'Burn, the celebrated Irish ventriloquist, who died January, 1796. After his discharge from the service, Haskey returned to Walsall, and for some time was engaged in assisting the gardeners in the locality by making holes in the ground with his wooden leg. He had received but little education, but was remarkable for being particularly clean and neat in his person. During the time of Stanton's theatre in Walsall, he frequently from the gallery set the house in a roar, by sham dialogues, in two voices, between himself and "Tommy." He was frequently invited by the Earl of Dudley (father of the late Earl, and whose extraordinary benevolence gained him the enviable appellation of the "Poor Man's Friend,") to his seat at Himley Hall, for the purpose of exercising his peculiar talents for the amusement of his lordship and friends. It is said that on such occasions he had the pride always to engage a post chaise to convey him thither. It is not known how he was introduced to the London stage, but he was for a considerable time the means of greatly increasing the exchequer of Sadler's Wells, and cleared on one occasion, for his benefit, no less than £200.

In 1798, during the war which arose out of the first French revolution, a handsome subscription was entered into by the town, to defray the expense of raising a corps of cavalry and another of infantry, to be entitled the *Walsall Volunteer Association*, and on the 12th of May, in that year, a meeting was held at the Guildhall on

the subject ; a letter from the Marquis of Stafford was read on that occasion by the Chairman, Joseph Scott, Esq., communicating his Majesty's gracious acceptance of their services. Both corps were accordingly established, and numbered in all, forty-three gentlemen. The following particulars, relative to the presentation of the standard colours to the association, may prove somewhat interesting.

The ceremony took place at Barr Beacon, about three miles from Walsall, on the morning of the 23d September, 1799. The assemblage is described as having been both "elegant and numerous, the morning propitious, and the ceremony of a most impressive character."* The standard for the cavalry was consecrated by the Rev. John Darwall, chaplain to the corps, who delivered a prayer and address suitable to the occasion. The standard was then presented to Captain Scott, by Mrs. W. Adams, of Walsall, as proxy for Lady Scott, assisted by Captain Scott's children. His reply to the address is described as one which portrayed the feelings of a man with the best interests of his country at heart.

At the same time and place, the infantry colours were also consecrated, by the Rev. — Kipling, lecturer of Walsall, and presented to Richard Jesson, Esq., Captain, by Miss Leigh, daughter of the Rev. W. Leigh, of Ashbourne Hall, in the county of Derby, accompanied by an appropriate address, to which Captain Jesson made a suitable reply. After the ceremony, the Corporation of Walsall, fully sensible of the zeal manifested by the neighbouring gentry, and their fellow-townsmen, provided a dinner at the George Inn, of which the clergy, gentry, and associated corps partook. William Adams, Esq., then mayor, presided. The entertainment, it is said, consisted of the choicest articles the season could afford, and cost the corporation upwards of one hundred guineas.

It is further recorded, that in 1802, on the dissolution of the body, the members of the "volunteer cavalry," in consideration of the handsome and spirited conduct of their Captain, presented him with a silver cup, value fifty guineas.

This leads to the notice of another association of a similar character now existing in the town, viz. :—

* Pearce's Directory and Antiquities, p. 211.

THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL YOMANERY.

The Walsall troop of this corps was established in 1819, under the command of Captain Barber, and at present numbers seventy one members, besides the officers. It forms a portion of the South Staffordshire corps, which is composed of eleven troops. The corps is wholly comprised of volunteers, each of whom provides his own horse; the arms and accoutrements being supplied by government. The following gentlemen are the present officers of the troop :—

THOS. CHAWNER, Esq.,	<i>Captain.</i>
The Hon. AUGUSTUS CALTHORPE,.....	<i>1st Lieutenant.</i>
WALTER WILLIAMS, Esq.,.....	<i>2nd do.</i>
THOMAS WOOD,	<i>Quarter Master.</i>

There are six drill days during the year, and the entire corps assemble annually at Lichfield, for one week, on what is termed permanent duty. They have frequently been called out to assist the civil authorities; and in 1842, during the chartist riots in the potteries, rendered invaluable aid in quelling similar disturbances which, at that time, assumed a very serious aspect in this part of the country, especially at a place called Gold's Hill, near Wednesbury, where the rioters destroyed property to a considerable amount, and, but for the timely interference of this corps, under the command of Captain Forster, it is impossible to estimate what loss of both life and property would have ensued. The troop put the rioters to flight, following them up so closely, that many had to take to the canal in order to effect an escape; in this way two, supposed to have been amongst the ringleaders, were drowned. Great numbers were taken prisoners, and accompanied under an escort to West Bromwich, where they were at once brought up for examination before Lord Dartmouth, and the greater portion of them committed to Stafford for trial. On this occasion the corps had been on active duty for three weeks, and, in consideration of their services, a subscription was entered into by the inhabitants for a testimonial, and eleven silver trumpets were presented—one for each troop. During a strike among the colliers in this, and the surrounding neighbourhood, last winter, the Walsall troop also rendered efficient service under Capt.

Chawner. It is gratifying to know that the troop is likely soon to increase in numbers.

In 1824, the Corporation obtained an Act of Parliament for improving, lighting, and watching the town, and for the erection of gas works, which were accordingly erected in 1826, at the cost of £4000. This act was superseded by another of larger powers, passed in 1848, entitled the "**WALSALL IMPROVEMENT AND MARKET ACT,**" which was amended by another in 1850, providing for the better assessing of the poor and other local rates of the parish, for extending and improving the sewerage; for empowering the commissioners to erect **NEW GAS WORKS**, and other purposes.* This act embraces the clauses of the "**Town's Improvement and Police Acts of 1847,**" and some other general acts of Parliament. The Town Council, with three gentlemen who are elected to represent that portion of Rushall parish which adjoins the town, are the Commissioners of this local Act.

Numerous improvements have been effected under those various acts, which, (combined with the progressive influence of Freehold Land and Building Societies,) have contributed much to the enlargement and beauty of the town and neighbourhood.

The flagging, paving, and drainage of the streets, have also, to a great extent, engrossed the attention of the Commissioners.

THE MARKETS AND FAIRS

are held in High-street, which is well adapted for the purpose, being broad and of considerable length; it rises with a bold ascent from Digbeth to the summit of the hill, which is crowned by the noble parish church, and is lined on either side with first class shops.

In 1847 an attempt was made by the Corporation to erect a market hall on the Bowling-green, at the back of the Dragon Inn, which, if successful, would not only have involved a large expenditure of public money, but inflicted a serious injury upon many shopkeepers and tradesmen, without promoting in the slightest degree the interests of the public. The simple announcement of such a measure naturally aroused a strong demonstration on the part of the inhabitants, who organised so effectually, as not only to defeat

* This amendment was principally effected through the influence of the "**Ratepayers' Protection Society,**" who bore a considerable portion of the expenses attendant thereon.

the scheme, but totally upset the authority of the projectors. Popular indignation, long smothered, now burst forth in ardent denunciations against all exclusive administration—

“—— like a large and patient sea
Once roused by cruel weather”—

till at length, nothing short of a complete overthrow of the cabinet could satisfy popular opinion. The magic words “presto, change,” echoed through the council chamber, and immediately the local reins of government passed from the secret, if not avowed enemies of human intercourse, to those, who, (inasmuch as they belonged to) could better represent the human family. How irresistible is the tide of public opinion !

In 1809, a small market house was erected by the corporation, at the head of High-street (where formerly stood the market cross) for the sale of poultry, eggs, butter, &c., but of late years it merely formed a repository for the various stalls, which line both sides of the street on market and fair days. In 1852 this building was taken down, in connection with several worn out habitations, which had long been a disgrace to, and interfered with, the sanctity and appearance of the venerable pile, around which they so unceremoniously grouped ; the space thus given has been converted into a commanding (but from its great ascent a comparatively useless) approach to the top of the hill, where has also taken place a complete revolution. Before the south entrance to the church, which is now guarded by handsome iron gates, extends a spacious area, and the church-yard is protected by a neat palisading from the public path. New schools, of architectural beauty, have likewise been erected, which, though not exactly in keeping with the parent structure, yet add considerably to the scenic effect. The value of property given by Lord Hatherton on the occasion of these improvements was £270, and by the Earl of Bradford £300.

THE GENERAL MARKET

is held every Tuesday, and is well stocked with provisions, clothes, shoes, cutlery, books, &c. On Saturday there is also a good supply, but Tuesday is the regular market day.

THE PIG MARKET

is situate at the rear of a house in High-street, built in 1815 for the market-keeper, and now in the occupation of Mr. Payne, wine and spirit merchant. It may be easily recognised by the Walsall Coat of Arms (a bear and ragged staff,) in the centre of the building. This was at one period a market of great repute, toll having been received for as many as 2,000 pigs in one day ; owing, however, to the facilities afforded by railway transit, they are now principally brought to Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

ANNUAL FAIRS

are held on the Feast of St. Matthias (February 24), Whitsunday, and the Tuesday before old St. Michael's Day ; the latter is celebrated for onions and cheese. The fair at Whitsuntide* is not held by charter, but may be deemed a fair by prescription. On the Sunday before Michaelmas fair, commences the ANNUAL WAKE or FEAST, a few words respecting the origin of such festivities may not here be out of place.

WAKES appear to have been instituted in lieu of the sacrificial festivals, which usually accompanied Pagan Worship. The Pontiff † (states Dr. Oliver, a learned Antiquarian,) saw immediately that without some judicious adaptation of Christianity to the prevailing superstition, success could scarcely be anticipated, and at once issued directions to allow the natives the indulgence of some

* The term Whitsuntide is a combination of three words :—*White, Sunday, and Tide*, so called, because in the primitive church, those who had been newly baptised appeared at church—between Easter and Pentecost—in white garments.

+ Pope Gregory the Great, who first sent missionaries among the Saxons, to convert them to Christianity, A.D. 597. Before his elevation to the Papal chair, he had chanced to pass through the slave market at Rome, and perceiving some children of great beauty, inquired about their country. Finding they were English Pagans, he exclaimed,—*Non Angli, sed angeli forent, si essent Christiani* ; “They would not be English but angels, had they been but Christians ;” and from that time he was struck with an ardent desire to convert them, and ordered a monk named Augustine to undertake the mission. This pious father, upon his first landing in Thanet, sent one of his interpreters to Ethelbert, the Kentish King, stating that he was come from Rome, with offers of eternal salvation. The King immediately ordered the missionaries to be furnished with all necessities, and even visited them, though without declaring himself in their favour. Augustine, encouraged by this favourable reception, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the gospel ; and the King having at length openly espoused the Christian religion, his example wrought so successfully on his subjects, that numbers of them came voluntarily to be baptised, the father loudly declaring against any coercive means towards their conversion. In this manner the remaining kingdoms, one after the other, embraced the faith.

of their ancient peculiarities, by incorporating into Christianity, (in every practicable point,) the less offensive tenets of their own superstitions. He authorised Augustine to convert their temples into christian churches, by merely destroying the idols, and consecrating the altars, so that the people might enter their accustomed places of worship without suspicion, and offer their vows to the true and living God." Thus the existing heathen temples were made use of after a formal dedication to some christian saint.*

Such ceremonies were celebrated by a festival, and the Pontiff advised that the people should be encouraged on the day of festivity, to erect booths made of the branches of trees about the church; this encouragement, however, was soon abused, all the churches, whether previously heathen temples or not, should have the day of their guardian saint similarly observed, till at length these open festivities crept into nightly vigils, and were hence called *Wakes*.

Henry VIII abolished these feasts by law in 1536, but it appears to have had little or no influence on the general practice; for in 1579, Henry, Earl of "Darby," and others of the High Commission, under Queen Elizabeth, assembled at Manchester, and issued orders against pipers and minstrels playing, masking, and frequenting ale-houses, bull and bear baitings, on a Sunday, or any other day, during divine service, and prohibited all superfluous and superstitious ringings, common feasts, and wakes.†

In Ireland, wakes consist in the congregating together of relatives and friends to keep nightly vigils beside the body of a departed one; on such occasions, all the good traits and deeds of the deceased are recounted "o'er and o'er," not unfrequently in the most plaintive dirges. These mournful ditties, or *keenings* (as they are called by the natives), are generally performed by crones engaged for the purpose, who give vent to the most touching and expressive ejaculations, such as—

"Ah, *wirasthru! wirasthru!* † why did you die!"

The *dhudeen*§ liberally bestows its soothing influence, and in this manner grief is duly drowned in copious libations of *potheen*.||

* Bede, I. c. 26.

+ Oliver's Hist. Coll. ch., p. 168, Wolverhampton, and Whittaker's Manchester.

† God help us.

§ A short clay tobacco pipe used by the peasantry.

|| Illicit whiskey distilled in the bogs.

This custom formerly prevailed to a great extent, it is now, however, confined to but few parts of the country (principally the south and west), and only kept up amongst the peasantry and lower classes.

"*Keening funerals*" (especially in the wild and romantic west), are of a character calculated to impress the beholder with the most peculiar sensations. A friend once, in a letter to the writer, thus graphically describes the impression he experienced on first witnessing one of these effectively picturesque processions :—

" Having lunched at the Adelphi Lodge, in the Killeries, with ——, I proceeded *en route* from Westport to Clifden, through the heart of Connemara; the evening was warm, but more genial than sultry, owing to a light wind that occasionally breathed over the magnificent scenery by which I was surrounded. I had dismounted from my horse, and was leisurely ascending a new road, made over the side of a mountain, gazing around with inexpressible delight, when suddenly a cadence (the memory of which will haunt me to my dying hour), wafted on the passing breeze, and caught my ear. I immediately remounted, and on reaching the summit of the acclivity, a scene presented itself which caused me to deplore most bitterly my want of artistic skill—it was what is called a "keening funeral." In the foreground was one of the common carts of the country containing a bier; upon this rested the coffin, on either side of which sat an aged crone, who alternately gave forth a strain that would have surprised even Von Weber, and on a given signal, the chorus was taken up by a choir of women, who followed in slow procession, and rendered it with the utmost pathos. The scenic effect was greatly increased by the picturesque garb of the females, who were attired in red mantles with hoods,* similar to a monk's cowl. The *coup de fil* of the mournful train was peculiarly imposing, and I can never forget the impression caused by the winding of the cortège up 'the mountain's brow.' "

* These cloaks, which are generally composed of either red or blue cloth, or *friese*, resemble in form the Spanish mantle, and are commonly worn by the female peasants in the west of Ireland.

PART II.

TOUR OF INSPECTION.

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE CHURCH—PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, &c., &c.

We shall now, with the reader's permission, set out on a tour of inspection, and note down the particulars of such Places of Worship, Institutions, and Public Buildings, &c., &c., as shall be found most worthy of observation.

As a starting point, we shall begin with the fine old PARISH CHURCH.

"——— On the hill top behold
The village steeple, rising from the midst
Of many a rustic edifice."

This venerable cruciform structure (dedicated to St. Matthew) occupies a commanding position at the head of the town. It is approached from High-street by several tiers of steps, and its lofty summit commands an extensive and interesting view of the town and surrounding country. Its fine old Gothic spire, and the descending streets, with houses clustering round, as if paying homage to the sacred pile, render it an object peculiarly striking and picturesque, and one calculated to inspire the observer with feelings of profound adoration and respect. In the year 1821 the church, with the exception of the spire and chancel, was nearly all rebuilt, in the transition style of the 14th and 15th centuries, from a design by Mr. Godwin, at the cost of £20,000, of which £10,000 was levied in rates on the parishioners; £500 was given by the Church Building Society, who also lent £2,000; and the remainder

was raised by the sale of pews, and by individual contributions. In this costly undertaking every attention appears to have been paid to the external form of the ancient fabric. The interior has a light and airy appearance, the nave is lofty and spacious, and the galleries are supported by slender, clustered iron columns, terminating in fine pointed arches. There are sittings for 2,500 persons, of which 1,136 are free.* The noble window at the west end contains a beautiful stained glass figure of St. Matthew, part of which was blown out on the evening of the 10th October, 1847, by an explosion of gas; fortunately, the disaster occurred after the congregation had dispersed; one of the beadle's, however, lost his life by the catastrophe, and the interior of the building suffered considerable damage.

In the eastern gallery, over the entrance to the chancel, stands a large full-toned organ, which, however, completely destroys the effect of a magnificent Gothic arch. This organ was built by Green of London, 1773, and it is recorded that the old one was at that time purchased for £12 10s., by Mr. George Hill, who built a house to contain it, but afterwards sold it to the inhabitants of Stowe Market, Suffolk, for their church, where, it is believed, it now stands.

Though there are no traces of Saxon architecture about this church, yet it is certainly a fabric of considerable antiquity: many of its antique ornaments are still preserved. Amongst the most remarkable are seven oaken stalls on either side of the chancel, the seats of which are ornamented with a variety of grotesque figures, carved in basso-relievo. These seats were termed, in Monkish language, "misereres," but in modern phraseology might be appropriately designated "wide-a-wakes," being so peculiarly constructed as to effectually debar the penitential occupants from somniferous indulgences. In order to retain a seat, it was necessary to sit "bolt upright," a single "nod" being sufficient to lay prostrate the offender.

* Pews in a church were not introduced till after the Reformation, when, it is recorded, they were furnished with cushions to sleep on.—(Weaver, Fun. Mon. p. 701.) In early days the seats were moveable, so as to afford sufficient space for processions and other ceremonies, which then constituted an essential part of public worship.

The fine old alabaster font, of octagonal shape,* is richly sculptured, and exhibits eight shields. Not a few, however, of the ancient monuments have been desecrated, and either broken or removed. It is said that certain tablets, on which were graven sundry old doles, have also disappeared ; and it has been whispered, too, that they had been purposely put out of the way by those who held peculiar faith in the adage, "dead men tell no tales."

Under the chancel is a curious crypt of massive Gothic workmanship, which forms a subterranean passage through the eastern portion of the churchyard.

The tower, which is situated at the south-west angle of the west front, is of surpassing strength, and far from inelegant. It is composed of coarse limestone, and surmounted by a lofty and graceful spire, which was erected about the year 1775, when a peal of eight bells was put up by Mr. Rudhall, of Gloucester, the tenor weighing above 23 cwt.

Each of the bells bears an appropriate inscription, as follows :—

- 1 "When us you ring, we'll sweetly sing."
- 2 "Fear God, honour the king."
- 3 } "Prosperity to this parish."
- 4 }
- 5 "The Rev. John Darwall, Vicar."
- 6 "Thomas Rudhall, Gloucester, Founder."
- 7 "Thomas Hector, Edward Licet, Thomas Overton,
Deykin Hemming, Church Wardens."
- 8 "I to the church the living call,
- 9 "And to the grave do summon all."

Bells are of considerable antiquity, they were introduced by Divine command into the Jewish ceremonies, as recorded by Moses (Exod. xxviii. 33). It also appears by holy writ, that they were used by the Jews as appendages to their war-steeds.—Zech. xiv. 20. Dr. Oliver says, "Bells were first used to proclaim the hours of Christian devotion so early as the sixth or seventh century, and

* The octangular shape is the most common.—(Oliver, Hist. Coll. Ch. Wolverhampton.) One of the earliest specimens is the font of St. Tecta at Milan, which was inscribed by St. Ambrose as follows :—

Octachorum sanctas templum surrexit in usus,
Octagonus fons est, munere dignus eo.
Hoc numero decuit sacri baptismatis aulam,
Surgere, quo populis vera salus reddit.
Luce resurgentis Christi, qui claustra resolvit
Mertis, et tumulis suscit exanimis.

subsequently became common. They were baptized by appropriate names, and being solemnly consecrated, became subservient to the uses of superstition ; and the passing bell was supposed to drive away the evil spirit from the bed-side of the dying christian, that the soul at its departure might escape his talons." An injunction was given by the Council of Edward VI., " that all ringing with holy bells to drive away devils, and all ringing or knowling of bells should be utterly forborene ; partly owing to this (continues the learned Doctor,) which prompted the avarice of churchwardens or parishes to dispose of all their bells as useless and superstitious, and partly to the ravages of the subsequent civil wars, few bells remained in our churches when King Charles was restored."

Durandus enumerates six kinds of bells in the monastic institutions, viz. :—1. Squilla, rung in the refectory ; 2. Cymbalum, in the cloister ; 3. Nola, in the choir ; 4. Nolula, or Dupla, in the clock ; 5. Campana, in the steeple ; 6. Signum, in the tower.

Fosbrooke says "that bells had brass or silver rings attached to the ropes, and were rung anciently by the priests themselves, and afterwards by their servants."* This is considered to be the origin of one of the forms of induction into a benefice, when the priest is obliged to ring a bell.

It appears by ancient records that the benefice of St. Matthew's, or All Saints', was granted to the Monastery of Hales Owen, by Sir William Rufus, about the 4th Henry III. (1220), and was valued at £10 19s. 7d. in the King's books.† It was then a rectory, but was soon reduced to a vicarage, through the greediness of the monks, who (on a system not inapplicable to some dignitaries of the 19th century,) appropriated the great tithes to themselves, and appointed a vicar, or substitute, to perform the duty for a comparatively trifling emolument. A tolerably good idea of how the high ecclesiastics of the Church lived in those days can be formed from the old ballad of King John and the Abbot of Canterbury :—

"A hundred men the king did heare say,
The abbot kept in his house every day;
And fifty gold chaynes, without any doubt,
In velvet coates waited the abbot about."‡

* Gloss v. Circuli. Campana.

+ Shaw's Antiquities, p. 8 ; or Dugd. Monast, tom ii. p. 65.

‡ Relics of Anc. Poet, vol. ii. p. 309.

The endowment of the vicarage bears date 1248. The vicar nominated received a yearly stipend of thirty marks,* together with whatever small tithes and obventions might arise within the then chapelries of Wednesbury and Rushall, but which are now separate parishes. "Quod cum Magister Vincentius, rector Ecclesia de Waleshale ipsi cesserit, vel decesserit dicti abbas et conventus, dictam ecclesiam de Waleshale habeant, cum pertinentibus et fructibus, ejus in usus proprios convertendo, salvâ tamen vicariâ tres-decem marcarum assignandarum vicario, per viros fidelis et discretos ad hoc per episcopum deputatos in certis obventionibus ecclesiæ; qui etiam aream et ædificia ecclesiæ dividunt inter prædictus religiosas et vicarium, secundum quod ratione præviâ viderint expedire."†

A brother and sisterhood, called the "Guild of St. John the Baptist," once had an altar in this church; for it is recorded in the 26th Richard II. that a royal license, dated at Westminster, was granted to T. Mollesley and Henry Flaxale, to found a chantry for two chaplains to celebrate mass daily, at the altar of St. John the Baptist, in the parish church of Walsall, "for the good estate of the King and his beloved consort, the Queen of England, and William Marchion, Earl of Suffolk, and Isabel, his wife, whilst living, and for their souls after death; and for the souls of Henry, late Duke of Warwick, and their predecessors and successors; also, for the brethren and sisters of the guild; and for the souls of all the faithful departed."‡ There were also founded four other chantries; the first by John de Beverle and William Coleson, of Walsall, in the 39th of Edward III.; the second by Roger Hillary, Knight, 15th Richard II.; the third by Thomas Aston, of Heywood, Knight, 5th Henry IV.; and the fourth by the families of Vernon and Bernard. A pension of £6 was annually paid to each chantry. Under a statute of 1st Edward VI. these chantries were dissolved, and the rents and services thereof reserved to the lord of the manor.

* A mark is 13s. 4d.

+ [TRANSLATION.]—"That when the Master Vincenç, the rector of the Church of Walsall, shall have given up or yielded to him, the said abbot and convent may have the said church at Walsall, with its appurtenances and fruits, to convert them to their proper use, thirty marks being reserved to the vicarage, to be paid to the vicar by faithful and discreet persons, deputed by the bishop for this purpose, from certain incomes of the church, who shall also divide the area and buildings of the church between the aforesaid religious persons and the vicar, as they in consideration may think fit."

† Shaw's Antiquities, p. 9.

Mary and Elizabeth afterwards granted the several chantry lands to divers persons.* The living, as before stated, is a vicarage, valued in days of yore (as appears by the King's books,) at £10 9s. 7d.: it is now worth £500 per annum.

The patronage is vested in the Earl of Bradford, who is required, in connection with Lord Hatherton, to keep in repair the chancel, both being impro priators of the greater part of the rectorial tithes. In 1845 the tithes were commuted, the rectorial for £330, and the vicarial for £300 per annum. The Rev. J. H. Sharwood, M.A., is the present vicar.

The foundation-stone of the present schools was laid by Mrs. H. Highway, October 27, 1852: they cost £743 6s. 10d., of which sum £422 17s. 3d. was raised by a bazaar, held in September, 1851; £223 was given by charitable societies, viz., by the Committee of Council on Education, £173; the National Society, £45; and the Lichfield Diocesan Board, £15; the balance being made up by collections from sermons, private contributions, and the sale of old materials. The schools adjoin the church, and were built by Mr. James Rowley, under the gratuitous superintendence of W. Ward, Esq., J.P., and comprise spacious school rooms, well lighted and ventilated, as well as a convenient residence for the master.

Two more schools, one at Birchills, and another at the Pleck, are now in course of erection. The foundation-stone of the former was laid June 13th (1855), by the Rev. J. H. Sharwood, who delivered an excellent address on the occasion, dwelling on the great responsibility of parents, and their duty to see that their children enjoy the privileges which were being provided for them. The site, value £135, has been given by the Earl of Bradford: the estimated cost of the building is £800.

The foundation-stone of the latter (in connection with which it is in contemplation to erect a church) was laid by Mrs. Jones, of Spring-hill, June 18th, in the present year (1855). The land for these buildings has also been given by the Earl of Bradford, and is valued at £484. The cost of the schools, including fence-walls to the site of proposed new church, is estimated at £1000.

The churchyard having been found much too small for the in-

* Curtis's old MS.

creased wants of the parish, the corporation, in 1750,* gave a spacious piece of land on the south side of the town, and in the same year it was walled round, and consecrated as a burial ground. This cemetery—

“Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,”

occupies an elevated site in Bath Street (formerly called Chapel ground), and at the time of its construction might have been described as near the hamlet called the Windmill,† which is now, however, so inseparably connected with the town, that it is no longer a hamlet, but part and parcel of the town itself. Five years ago the nearest habitation was “the Windmill Tavern,” kept by a respected townsman, and now member of the town-council, Mr. Benjamin Abnett. The ground consists of about two acres, and is covered with tombs and ornamental monuments, on not a few of which are inscriptions of a powerful and touching character. It is now so amply furnished with the ashes and memorials of the dead, that independent of the necessity of carrying out the principle of extra-mural interment, it is absolutely requisite that an additional resting place should be formed, of a more modern and extensive character.

An inquiry into the present over-crowded state of this burial-ground has recently taken place before Dr. Holland, inspector of

* There is some doubt as to the accuracy of this date, some fix 1756, others 1759. The only evidence on the subject is a tombstone bearing the following inscription:—

WILLIAM BURN
departed this life August ye 8th
175—, Aged 56 He being the
First that was buried here.

The last figure may be taken either for an 0, 6, or 9. An anecdote is current that a dispute once arose between two townsmen, with reference to the exact date on the gravestone in question, and a wager was the result, when one of the parties (more acute than the other) managed, previous to the time appointed for deciding the wager, to get unperceived to the spot, and adroitly added a tail to the 0, whether at the top or bottom it is difficult to determine, as it now represents one both ways; we therefore deemed it the safest plan to select the figure that would do for *all three*, and in reality goes for *nought*.

+ So called from a very ancient “corn-mill” in the vicinity, with reference to which there is the following record bearing date 33 Edward I:—“Thomas le Rouse, Knt., Lord of a purparty of Walshale, grants to Sir Roger Morteyn, Knt., and his heirs, a reasonable road to his windmill of Walshale, for a cart and horse at pleasure; for which the said Roger gave him his purparty of the fishery called Ladypool, with its appurtenances. Dat. at Walshale, anno regni, reg. E. fil. reg. H. III., 33.” [Chartulary, in Brit. Mus.] See Ancient record in Appendix, concerning “the grinding of corne” by the inhabitants of Walshale in the Lord’s Mills, in the reign of Richard II.

grave-yards. The investigation was brought about through a memorial to Sir George Grey, signed by most of the gentry, clergy, magistrates, and members of the town-council, praying that the grave-yard now in Walsall might be closed. From the evidence adduced, it appeared to be a matter of impossibility to make a new grave without disturbing another, and, in order to find sufficient space, it was necessary to use a boring rod : in every case half decomposed remains were turned up, and the ground was literally strewn with bones, to some of which the very flesh and ligaments were attached. The Sexton's wife affirmed that the fumes arising from the disturbed soil have been so intolerable as to frequently cause her husband to faint during his occupation, and but for timely aid the consequences might have proved fatal. It was also stated that the present Sexton* had been in office about fourteen years, during which period he had thrice worked the ground over, and had commenced the fourth round ; and, furthermore, that the place was made a play-ground for children, a pasture for sheep, and a resort for dissolute characters, who actually converted the tombstones into gaming tables.† A discussion arose as to the advisability of making an exception with regard to the final closing of old family vaults, and it was shown, that at Plymouth and other places, where the right of burial in such was reserved, the vaults, soon after the formation of a new cemetery, invariably passed into disuse.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCHYARD was likewise represented as being full, without possessing any means of extension. The number of interments in the vaults was not above twenty annually.

In **ST. PETER'S BURIAL GROUND**, which was opened in 1841,

* "Sexton," here, means "gravedigger." In many places the term is only applied to an under officer of the church, whose duty it is to keep the building in order, and open the pew doors, &c. Here, the beadles perform those offices.

+ This reckless and indecent profanation of the "sacred dormitory" lamentably recalls to one's mind the vitiated taste and customs of the early ages, when churchyards were no sooner enclosed, than they were appropriated as places of public amusement. According to Aubrey, "in every parish was a church-house, to which belonged spits, crocks, and other utensils, for dressing provisions. Here the housekeepers met, the young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, &c., the ancients gravely sitting by and looking on." Fosbrook further informs us, that "Whitsun ale were brewed by the churchwardens, and sold in the church; and the profits—there being no rates for the relief of the poor—were distributed amongst them." It was also customary for barbers to come and shave the parishioners in the churchyard on Sundays and high festivals, before matins. This liberty continued till A.D. 1422, when it was restrained by a particular prohibition of Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln. (Oliver's Hist. Col. Ch. Wolverhampton, p. 95.)

there had been up to the time of the present inquiry, 841 interments ; and it was observed that a grave was no sooner made here, than it became filled with water, although the ground had been drained throughout the entire length of the boundaries.

From the nature of the foregoing evidence it is obvious that the speedy formation of a NEW CEMETERY, on a more extended scale, is highly necessary, and we trust that ere long Walsall will be able to claim, amongst other important improvements, a spot for the interment of its dead such as can be looked upon with some satisfaction ; and not a depository like the present, which it is impossible to survey without feelings of regret, horror, and disgust.

Immediately opposite the principal entrance to the cemetery are
MOLESLEY'S ALMS-HOUSES.

They comprise eleven tiled, brick dwellings for as many poor women, and are built somewhat after the Tudor fashion. They are readily recognizable from the singular height of their chimneys, and an inscription on a stone slab in front of the central habitation, descriptive of their origin. They were erected and endowed by the Corporation, A.D. 1825, in lieu of a dole of one penny theretofore annually distributed to every person resident in the borough and foreign of Walsall, and parish of Rushall, and commonly called "Molesley's dole." The full particulars relative to this dole and institution, as well as a similar one close by, known as "HARPER'S ALMS-HOUSES," will be found in another portion of this work, under the head of "Inquiry into the Charities." We shall, therefore, (with the reader's permission) pass on through one of yon favourite avenues, lined on either side with motley groups of well tended gardens, protected by trimmed and perfumed hedges,—and, for the most part, occupied by such of the inhabitants as are not favoured with similar retreats at their respective homes,—in order to get a peep at the pretty

VICARAGE HOUSE,

which stands at a short distance beyond, where the smoke may be seen gracefully curling through the high and tufted trees. This beautifully secluded dwelling is more an object of admiration for its extremely modest and picturesque appearance, than for any peculiar elegance of structure. It is approached by a winding path, bordered by fragrant shrubs and evergreens, and pleasantly shaded by

trees of various hues, in which it is so embosomed, as to be at a few yards distance, almost obscured from view. Nature's loveliest gifts adorn its stuccoed walls, and on one side extends a sloping lawn ; in fine, it is just such a spot as the romantic mind would conceive to be a suitable abode for a ministering servant of God, and forcibly recalls the words of the poet,—

“ ————— If there's peace to be found in the world,
A heart that is humble might hope for it here.”

On an adjoining height, called St. Mary's Mount, stands out in bold relief

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL,

dedicated to St. Mary. It is a large, handsome, and substantial structure (its walls being over three feet at its base,) in the Grecian style, capable of accommodating upwards of a thousand persons. It was founded by the late Rev. Francis Martyn,* by private subscriptions, from the design of Joseph Ireland, Esq., of London, and was opened in the summer of 1827 with the imposing ceremonial usual upon such an occasion. Its cost, including the presbytery, was upwards of £6,000. The Earl of Shrewsbury (through whose instrumentality the building has been cleared of all incumbrances) was a princely contributor ; also, Joseph Bagnell, Esq., of Spring Hill, who gave £500. The land, together with the adjoining burial ground, was the gift of the late Mr. Joseph Cox.

The Schools were built a short time afterwards, but have been since enlarged to their present size. They consist of two long well-lighted rooms, each of which is capable of accommodating 200 children. The present average number of attendants in the

* The reverend founder (who died A.D., 1838, in his fifty-sixth year,) was revered by persons of all denominations. His memory is perpetuated by a votive Tablet of classic beauty, designed and executed by Mr. W. Smith, a local sculptor, of unquestionable, though with regret it must be added, by no means duly appreciated talent. It comprises a handsome slab of jet marble, bearing a suitable inscription ; the slab rests on a richly sculptured base of chaste design, composed of *oem* stone, and exhibiting in *alto relieve* the various insignia appertaining to the sacerdotal office ; the Chausible, Thurible, Chalice, Crucifix, Stole, Maniple, and Girdle. The whole is surmounted by a colossal bust of the deceased, supported by a bold cornice, from the centre of which rises a cross, surrounded by a halo of radiant glory. The likeness has been modelled from a highly prized miniature, and pronounced admirable. Altogether this appropriate work of art, whether as regards design or execution, displays merit of no ordinary character, and it is to be hoped that the talented artist will meet with that encouragement to which he has proved himself so pre-eminently entitled.

day school is about 150. There is also a Sunday school, with about 200 children. Besides these, however, there are several schools kept by private persons, and under the auspices of the Catholic clergy in different quarters of the town. Those attached to St. Mary's are under the care of the religious Sisters of St. Paul, whose zeal is greatly to be extolled.

The present officiating clergymen are the Revs. Walter Lovi and W. F. Payne.

The foundation-stone of a new Chapel has been recently laid on a site in Blue Lane,—a quarter of the town principally inhabited by natives of the "Emerald isle," for whose accommodation it is intended. It will be a large building, in the Gothic style, dedicated to St. Patrick, and capable of holding 1000 persons. It is expected to be opened for public service about the close of the present year (1855).

Within a short distance of *St. Mary's* Chapel is a neat row of buildings, remarkable for their elevated position, and called *St. Mary's Row*, the principal portion of which is occupied by the manufactory and residences of Messrs. Harvey and Buffery, extensive platers and harness manufacturers. "*St. Mary's Mount*" commands a broad and pleasing aspect, embracing the ancient town of Wednesbury (vulgarly called "Wedgebury,") and several intermediate works, among which stand out prominently those of Messrs. Lancaster and Beyfords, situate near the Pleck, and the new "*Alma Tube Works*," belonging to Edward Russell, Esq.

THE RACE COURSE *

stretches its verdant turf immediately in front, and is bounded on one side by an imposing street named after the Lord of the Manor, "Bradford Street," and composed of handsome stuccoed residences, detached, and semi-detached, as well as in uniform groups, most of them adorned with neatly-laid out flower plats and shrubberies, and on the other by the South Staffordshire Railway. The *GRAND STAND* was erected in 1809, at the cost of £1,300 (in £25 shares,)

* This land belongs to the Lord of the Manor, but the freeholders of the parish claim the right of feeding cattle thereon, from Lammas Day to Candlemas in every year. This privilege has been enjoyed from time immemorial, and it is probable was one of the many liberties granted by William Rufus, in the reign of Henry III., already alluded to in page 4.

on a piece of land, measuring 165 square yards, given by the Earl of Bradford, on a lease of 99 years, at the nominal rent of one shilling per annum. It was provided that each subscriber should receive interest for his money, and a free ticket, transferable at pleasure. Soon after the completion of the building, one of the lower compartments was converted into a billiard room, which was supported for some time by annual subscribers. It has however been in disuse for several years. The table (which still remains in its accustomed position) was formerly the property of Lord Chichester Spencer, of Fisherwick Park.

The Stand is now in the possession of Mr. Boynton (of the Shakespear Tavern, Peal Street,) to whom it has been let on rental for a period of seven years.

The Races are held here annually, at Michaelmas, on the Wednesday and Thursday, during the wake.

It will now be necessary to return to our original starting point by a circuitous route, through the most ancient portion of the town, where gable fronts, and moss-covered tiles, dusky fabrics, and narrow lanes, alone present themselves, but which, for their very imperfections and infirmities, are rendered doubly interesting, teaching, as they do, a useful lesson—humility to man. As for ourselves, we confess to having a superstitious reverence for the antique, whether old buildings, old books, old paintings, old china, or old arm chairs; and in proportion as we abhor the sight of ancient dames in youthful garb, so much, is our antipathy to old dwellings with inconsistently modern fronts, preferring rather to behold them in their pristine uncouthness, than in hypocritical costume. Let not these remarks, however, be misconstrued into an advocacy of existing evils opposed to public good; on the contrary, it is contended that private interests, or private taste, should at all times give way to public benefits, and consequently, whatever, or wherever, may be found an obstacle to public health or convenience, whether it be “the old house at home,” or the palace of a monarch, such should be alike removed.

Entering DUDLEY STREET from “St. Mary’s Mount,” we repass the “Chapel Schools,” and “Vicarage Gate,” and continue its narrowing course to where it unites with Peal Street, and is joined on the right by BATH STREET, at the entrance of which, imme-

diately opposite to "Harper's Alms-houses," stand the family residence and warehouses of F. B. Oerton, Esq., the present mayor.*

In Dudley Street, facing Bath street, are

THE VICARAGE WATER BATHS,

from which the latter street derives its present name. These baths were established in 1850, by the late Thomas Gamson, and comprise a large plunge bath, and several slipper baths, hot and cold. They are supplied with the purest water, from natural springs, with which Walsall abounds. The baths have conferred a gracious boon on the town, and afford in the summer season a luxury much to be desired and enjoyed.

In Peal Street there is nought to particularize save its extreme narrowness and topsy-turvy appearance, more especially where it unites with two branches, called CHURCH STREET and NEW STREET, to which the respective titles of *Church Lane* and *Crooked Alley* would assuredly have been more appropriate. The former of these leads to the summit of CHURCH HILL, and the latter to the suburbs of LITTLE LONDON and the WINDMILL. The approach to this junction, from either side, forms an ascent which bears a striking resemblance to a pig's back, and singularly *apropos*, one of the most celebrated pork shops in the town (Mr. John Smith's) is here situated. In some parts the space is scarcely sufficient to allow the passing of two wheelbarrows, and certainly deserves the attention of the "Town Commissioners;" for while they beautify and improve the "West end," they should not altogether forget their less fortunate brethren in this time-honoured portion of the town. Turning our course into the zigzag division of "New Street," and steering onwards through the upper portion (which is of somewhat fairer dimensions) we pass TEMPLE STREET,† and a narrow passage, called GORTON'S YARD (both of which communicate with Church Hill and *Hill Street*,) and take the next opening, BIRMINGHAM STREET, a declivity leading to *King Street* and *Ablewell Street*, and terminating in the *Birmingham Road*, where

* Mr. Oerton has a private mansion, now in course of erection, on a retired and picturesque spot, between the "Old Windmill" and the ancient habitation long known as the "Folly House." The building occupies an elevated position, and commands an aspect of considerable extent and beauty.

+ Temple Street was at one period "*Crooked Alley*" in reality, both by name and nature.

is situate *Spring Hill*, a beautiful seat in the occupation of William Jones, Esq., on whose grounds the "Walsall Floral and Horticultural Society" held on the 18th July, in the present year (1855), their second and most successful show of the season. The houses in Birmingham Street, though not very numerous, yet embrace a great variety of style, young and old, little and big, public and private, stick side by side together. About midway on the left, a group of the "rael ould stock" form a kind of curve, not very much dissimilar to "Vandyke's line of beauty" (only scarcely so graceful) and seem as if striving with each other for the foremost place; just as pedestrians on a race course may be seen eagerly pressing forward to obtain a peep at the "coming in." Some of the buildings are of a large and substantial character, and have attached to them extensive shopping. One spacious mansion (formerly the residence of Joseph Cowley, Esq., at one time Mayor of Walsall) has been recently rescued from decay by Mr. E. B. Baldwin, of Bradford Street,—an extensive saddle manufacturer,—who has purchased the property. Both house and grounds are now undergoing considerable renovations and improvements, which bid fair to render these premises once more, a prominent ornament to the neighbourhood.

On this site once stood the residence of Captain Henry Stone, who is described by Sir Simon Degge as having been originally a merchant of Plymouth; but by all accounts a busy man in sequestrations, decimations, and in the first war against the King having, it is said, gained thereby a great estate.* For many years previous to 1813 (when the property was bought by Joseph Cowley, Esq., who erected the present building) this ancient and noted habitation had been known by the sign of the "Wheat Sheaf," and ranked as a first-class inn. The portion now occupied by the garden and pleasure ground, then formed a spacious bowling green. In addition to common report, and other evidence of this having been the actual residence of that active officer of Cromwell's army, it is recorded by Shaw that the initials of his own and his wife's name were graven on a large brick in front of the building.†

* Degge's Additions to Erdeswick, p. 81.

† This brick is now in the possession of Joseph Cowley, Esq. The initials are graven thus:—

S.
H. S.
1662.

ABLEWELL STREET is of good length and proportionate width ; many of the buildings are commodious, and bear the stamp of ancient respectability ; here, are the extensive *Patent Tube Works* of Messrs. *Cowley and Madeley*, where some hundreds of hands are constantly employed ;* here, too, is a very old fabric, for many years known as the *Red Lion Inn*,† where, it is stated, that Queen Elizabeth once slept. There is, however, no authority for this but tradition.‡ A few paces from this famous hostel is

THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,

a handsome structure, with stuccoed front and Corinthian pilasters. It was erected in 1829, at the cost of £1,700, in lieu of an old chapel in Paradise Court, and is capable of accommodating 800 persons.

Branching out of Ablewell Street, on the south, leading to the Church, are *Hill Street*, a narrow opening, called the *Ditch*, and *Rushall Street* (upper) ; on the north, are *Pool Street*, *Bank Street*, *Paddock Lane*, and *Rushall Street* (lower), from which emanate several minor streets and courts. In the neighbourhood of "Paddock Lane" many buildings are now in course of erection. A new street is also in formation from here to Lichfield street, along the east side of Hatherton Lake, and promises a most desirable site for private residences.

LOWER RUSHALL STREET leads to both of the last-mentioned places, and comprises some spacious dwellings, most of which, however, exhibit unmistakable signs of broken-down pride. At the corner of Ablewell Street stands a large and conspicuous mansion, formerly the residence of the late Joseph Stubbs, Esq., Town Clerk, and father of the present highly-gifted and much-respected townsman, G. B. Stubbs, Esq. This building has, for some years, been occupied as a seminary (conducted by Mr. G. Bayley, a gentleman of known talent), and may be ranked as the only private academy, of any note, in the town. On the opposite side of the street is the manufactory of Messrs. Eyland and Sons, opticians, where several thousand pairs of spectacles are turned out weekly.

* Forty-five years ago, on the site of these premises, stood Mr. James Russell's gun-barrel manufactory, the chimney of which formed a most conspicuous object, being at that period the loftiest and only one of its kind in the town. What rank it would claim among the chimney population, now-a-days, it is difficult to say.

+ Situate at the corner of Paddock Lane.

‡ Shaw's Antiquities, p. 6.

In *Holthill Lane* (close by) are the stirrup works of Mr. Samuel Cox, a respected member of the Town Council. A short distance from the end of Lower Rushall Street, on the east side of Hatherton Lake, once stood REYNOLD'S HALL, the seat of John Persehouse, Esq., a distinguished loyalist, during the civil wars of Charles I. Not a vestige of this ancient structure is now remaining, the hall, gardens, and avenue, having been destroyed to get at the lime stone rocks underneath.*

UPPER RUSHALL STREET is composed of some good old-fashioned houses and shops, and may be considered a fair business street; instead however of passing up here, we shall take a short cut by Goodall Street to the Guildhall, merely stopping on our way for a few moments in order to notice

THE BAPTIST CHAPEL.

This place of worship was erected in 1833, at the cost of £810. It has since been considerably enlarged, and capacious school rooms have also been added. These improvements cost £400, the whole of which sum has been long since cleared off through voluntary contributions and collections from neighbouring congregations. There are two other Sunday schools connected with the chapel, one in *Short Acre*, where also is a preaching station, and one in New-hall Street (Windmill). Upwards of 500 children receive instruction on the Sabbath by means of these schools.

This church had a remarkably small beginning, having been originally formed of only five individuals, who met together for worship in an upper room, gratuitously set apart for the purpose.

* Sir Simon Degge says:—"At Reynold's Hall is the seat of John Persehouse, whose father was a practitioner in the law, and lived in good repute. His son adhered to King Charles I. in the late war, and was forced to a composition with the Parliament, at the rate of £119, by the name of John Piershouse, of Reynolds Haw, or Hall, Walsall. The said John was prebendary and vicar of Weston, Pen, and Rosse. The family had this seat in marriage with one of the daughters and co-heiresses of — Walker, of Reynolds Hall, in whose name and family it had for some time continued." Richard Persehouse, the last of the family who resided here, was left a minor. In 1762 he was one of those pricked down for Sheriff for the county of Stafford, but was not nominated or confirmed by the King. He had a tender constitution, and a thin habit of body, which was attacked by a fever that carried him off in December, 1771, being not more than 40 years old. He left the chief part of his estates at Reynolds Hall, Walsall, in Rushall, with a moiety of the tithes of the last parish, in Lynne, &c., to his godson, John Walhouse, second son of Moreton Walhouse, Esq., of Hatherton-on-Cannoc, by Frances, sister of Sir Edward Lyttleton, Baronet, of Pillaton. (Shaw's Antiquities, p. 7, and Sander's History of Shenstone, p. 238.)

Their exertions were not allowed to pass unrewarded, and in a short time their numbers had so far increased as to render it expedient to rent a large club-room, which was in due course opened for Divine service, and was for some time supplied with preachers from Birmingham, and the neighbouring towns. In 1832 the Baptists formed themselves into a society, and the Rev. James Maurice was invited to be their pastor : the efforts then put forth led to the building of the present structure. The Rev. Robert Hamilton succeeded Mr. Maurice, and soon afterwards a division took place, which caused the erection of *Ebenezer Chapel in Stafford Street*. The Rev. R. P. Macmaster is the present minister. Now then for

THE GUILDHALL.

It is said, that “ walls have ears.” Had they but the power of speech, doubtless, this fabric could a “ tale unfold.” A tale of “ gay and festive scenes ” in days of yore, when Corporate authority dwelt in empty sculls and bloated stomachs, in three-cocked hats and ornamental poles, in flowing robes and civic chains, in pageantry and splendour ; and Corporate duties consisted in eating, drinking, and making merry ; in loyal toasts and boisterous revelry ; whilst townsmen-dupes looked hungry on, and “ paid the piper.”

This judicial palace and seat of municipal authority, is a large and substantial building, the windows and angles of which are bound with fretted stone work. It was built about 1773. The centre retires some distance from the pathway, and is supported by projecting wings, forming a recess for the principal entrance, which is approached by a flight of steps, and enclosed by an iron gate and palisading. Over the doorway is a niche, which is said to have been originally intended for a statue of Charles I. ; it has, however, never been graced by the royal memento, and now contains a figure of *Justice*. The eye of a keen observer would readily detect that one of her scales is decidedly more elevated than the other,—a circumstance which, though not perhaps applicable to the present local administration, yet looks somewhat singular. Up to a very recent period the “ stocks ” held a prominent place in front of this edifice. They were erected in 1847, during the mayoralty of a gentleman who

bore the euphonous name of "Box," which brought forth sundry effusions from the Walsall "Muses," such as :—

" Yon curious leg vise, called the " stocks,"
The produce was, of a Walsall Box."

This not very graceful appendage was removed in 1854, on a motion made in the Town Council by Mr. John Wilkinson, of High Street, thus affording to the "Muses" an opportunity of completing the verse as follows :—

" So much did public will prevail,
This leg vise had to give 'leg bail.' "

The front entrance immediately opens into the *Court Room*, where are held the Quarterly and Petty Sessions. The right wing comprises a large apartment where the members of the Corporation meet, and is called the *Mayor's Parlour*. Connected with this wing, and fronting Goodall Street, is the *Police Station*—erected in 1843—under which is the Borough gaol, or "Lock up." The left wing is occupied by the *Dragon Inn*, where there is a spacious Assembly Room.* The County Court is held here monthly, but the room is also used for festivals, concerts, public meetings, elections, &c. The ancient wooden staves belonging to the Mayor and Corporation, and still deposited in the hall, are curious relics of antiquity, being decorated with heads of various animals, &c., rudely carved. A curious custom prevails, of throwing apples and nuts from the Guildhall on St. Clement's Day, to be scrambled for by the populace.†

Passing the "Pig Market" (which has been already under notice), we arrive at an opening on the right, at the corner of which stands a very ancient and remarkable-looking habitation, known as the Woolpack Inn, kept by Hugh Barlow. Now, bearing this in mind, together with the fact, that to each street is affixed its peculiar name, the tourist will be enabled to discover that the particular opening in question, is called "The Square,"—a conclusion at

* The present proprietor is Mr. Edward Parker.

† This custom appears to have been derived from the Druids. Meyrick, in his History of Cardiganshire, amongst many other sports common with the peasantry in Wales, and the origin of which he traces to Druidism, enumerates :—"Supping upon parsnips, nuts, and apples; then they catch at an apple suspended by a string, with the mouth alone; and the same by an apple in a tub of water." A similar custom prevails in both Scotland and Ireland, but is kept up on "Hallow Eve," the day preceding that of "All Saints," and not on St. Clement's Day.

which it is very doubtful he could have arrived, without the aid of the signs just pointed out, inasmuch as it bears about the same resemblance to a square as a "kilt does to a pair of trowsers," or "Queen Elizabeth's pocket pistol, in Dover Castle, to Colt's revolver." At one time it may have been entitled to that distinction, but at present (save a small space near High Street) it is merely a convenient passage leading to *Freer Street*, *Bridge Street*, and *Lichfield Street*, at which junction stands that well-conducted and justly-appreciated establishment, the *Stork Hotel*,* kept by Mr. George Moore.

In this square formerly stood the Theatre, built in 1803, by subscription, in shares of £50, each subscriber receiving the usual interest, and a silver ticket, transferable at pleasure. The site was granted by James Adams, Esq., for the term of 99 years. The inside was neatly fitted up, and the receipts of a full house was reckoned to produce from £50 to £60. Through want of sufficient support the building remained for a considerable period unoccupied, and was eventually converted into houses of business.

Now, whilst dramatic representations which "o'erstep not modesty," but "hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature," are calculated to cultivate pure and classic taste, and elevate the mind to nobility and virtue; entertainments, such as those too frequently met with in minor provincial theatres, are productive of the most vitiating results; perhaps, therefore, the removal of the building in question ought rather to be hailed as a fortunate circumstance than otherwise. It is, however, contended that in a town like Walsall—so flourishing in a commercial point of view—there should be some place of recreation for the toiling masses of the people; some institution in which might be combined the advantages of a cheap library and reading room; useful, entertaining, and illustrative lectures; dramatic and other readings; debating and mutual improvement classes; "popular concerts;" in fine, all representations suitable to the wants of the working classes, and tending to their intellectual and moral improvement.

What more interesting or picturesque, than a village reading party? Imagine the reader, perchance the village blacksmith, as

* At the corner of the square passage, opposite to the side entrance of the "STORK HOTEL," is the warehouse of Mr. Edward Adams, a gentleman much respected by all classes.

he sits on a summer's eve under the shade of "a brave old oak," in front of the village inn, with specks on nose, and sleeves upturned, exposing his brawny arms; mark how carefully he traverses the newspaper broadsheet, and traces with his horny forefinger line by line, lest a single sentence might be overpassed; notice how the neighbours eagerly gather round him, while with open mouths, they drink in every word. The reading may be indifferent, the newspaper out of date, but still the charm remains unbroken.

Why not carry out the idea, and establish in Walsall reading parties on an extended scale? Such a scheme has been recently tried in Birmingham by the Rev. J. C. Barrett, in St. Mary's school room, and with much success. On stated evenings, the current news is read from various organs, as well as extracts from the most useful and popular works; behind the reader hang maps and plans, to which reference is made as the occasion requires, and thus much valuable geographical and historical information is conveyed to the minds of the audience. Such mode of inculcating instruction to the adult working classes must prove of incalculable benefit.

The *Free Reading Room* established by the Rev. J. C. Miller, of St. Martin's, Birmingham, has also been productive of great good.

The following paragraph, which appeared in a recent number of the "*Staffordshire Advertiser*," also goes far to establish the importance of such a scheme:—

"**READINGS ON THE WAR, AT LONGTON.**—These bi-weekly readings, which from the first have been supported in a manner that must have been highly encouraging to the promoters of the scheme, have attracted such large audiences during the week, that it has been found necessary to hold them in the large hall, instead of the ante-room of the new Town Hall, as previously."

It is much to be regretted that Walsall should be so far behind in these important matters. This unfortunate state of things is evidently, in a great measure, attributable to prejudice and a ruinous division of class, which, wherever they exist, are certain to paralyse every effort used, to carry out schemes calculated to be universally beneficial. The favoured few can have their libraries, reading rooms, and sundry other privileges, their right to which is not for one moment denied; but, surely, whilst they enjoy those advantages, they might bestow a small portion of their wealth, their time, and

their patronage, on that class to whom, after all, they are so much indebted for their respective positions: nor should some of them forget that they themselves have sprung from that portion of the community whom they thus so ungenerously neglect and apparently despise.

The following extract from a letter written by Mr. W. Langham, Honorary Secretary to the late Mechanics' Institute, to the Right Hon. Lord Hatherton, and dated the 11th September, 1841 (just two months previous to the dissolution of this most useful of institutions*) is of itself sufficient to justify the foregoing remarks. After enumerating the various newspapers and periodicals (many of which it had become necessary to discontinue for the want of funds) and giving a financial statement, which showed on the one hand a fearful diminution of subscribers—there being then only 35†—and on the other a debt owing by the Society to the amount of £17 18s. 10*½*d., Mr. Langham thus proceeds:—

"When the Institution was in formation, and also up to the present time, it was our practice, as far as possible, to steer clear of politics and religion; we selected members of opposite politics, and also of various religious opinions, for committees and other offices; we did not allow any religious discussions to take place between Members while on the premises of the Institution; yet, with all this, the high Tory party of this town never gave us credit for so doing, but, on the contrary, used all their influence to prohibit the young men in their warehouses and offices becoming members, and ultimately prevented the attendance of those who had already entered without their knowledge; this, too, just at a time when a party of them had established a class for 'mutual instruction,' appointed to meet on certain evenings for the purpose of delivering and receiving opinions on philosophical questions. They have spoken of Mechanics' Institutions in terms not the most respectful, for which, I am sorry they had not more prudence and discernment; for I think that such societies are calculated to inspire the minds of the young with a real love of science and literature, and (next to religion) are best adapted to conduct them from all that is low and sensual."

The following is a verbatim copy of his Lordship's reply, which though laconic, yet speaks volumes.

"SIR,

"Teddlesley Hall, Sept. 13th, 1841.

"I am much obliged to you for your letter, and I beg leave to transmit to you *ten pounds*, as a donation to the 'Walsall Mechanics' Institution.'

"Yours truly,

"HATHERTON."

* The "Walsall Mechanics' Institute" was established 12th February, 1839, under the presidency of Richard James, Esq. F. Finch, Esq., then Member for the Borough, contributed the munificent sum of £100.

† Above 100 Members paid subscriptions the first quarter.

About the same time Robert Scott, Esq., then M.P. for Walsall, with the like liberality, became an annual subscriber of *five guineas*; and Viscount Ingestre also came forward with his support. The only other honorary members then belonging to the institution, and who subscribed from one to two guineas annually, were—Charles Forster, Esq. (the present member for the borough), C. F. Cotterall, John Day, H. Cox, H. Highway, and J. Hicken, the late able secretary to the “Anti-Corn Law League.” Left almost entirely dependant on a few philanthropic individuals, the society found it alike impossible to struggle against the prejudice, and operative influence of a wealthy and important class of large manufacturers, and the consequent apathy of those for whose benefit it was founded, and whose duty it was to support it to the uttermost. Thus fell, on the 12th November, 1841, the “Walsall Mechanics’ Institution.”

Let us now examine what were really the objects of this society, which appears to have been opposed with so much virulence. What states the prospectus?

“A Society which had for its object *the improvement of the working classes in moral character and mechanical skill*.”

By what means?

A library of reference, a circulating library and reading rooms, a museum of machines, models, minerals, and natural history; lectures on natural and experimental philosophy, practical mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, literature, mathematics, and other branches of useful knowledge, few of these opportunities of instruction having been hitherto within the reach of the working classes.

A Society which duly appreciated the benefits derivable from charitable education, and interfered not with other educational establishments: whose members were deeply impressed with the belief, that all education that required personal exertion in the obtaining, was most highly valued, and most wisely applied to the purposes of real life; and that *self cultivation* abstracted men from vicious pursuits, taught them the beneficial use of their own powers, led them to depend more on their own exertions, and generated habits of industry, sobriety, and economy,—a Society to be composed of men desirous of moving in their own improvement, of associating with all others who were so disposed, and of obtaining and communicating useful knowledge, from the first elements of education, to the higher branches of science.

Mechanics, who sought not to separate themselves from their more wealthy townsmen, but earnestly desired their assistance and co-operation, both in the establishment and management of the Institution; who invited all classes, and

formed such regulations as would be suitable to all, so far as confining themselves strictly to science and general literature, every member being left in the most perfect freedom to the enjoyment of his own religious and political opinions,—an Institution established for the purpose of spreading such principles as should give a beneficial direction to the ingenuity of working men—from whom mechanical inventions generally spring—that existing modes of manufacture might be improved, and new manufactures introduced.

The general subscription was 10s. per annum, but apprentices, and sons and brothers of members, being minors, were admitted to all the privileges of the Institution, on payment of 6s. annually.

It is surely unnecessary to offer any comments, but it is difficult to suppress a cry of shame to those, who could array themselves as antagonists to an Institution based upon such principles, and established for the furtherance of such objects ; and a still louder cry of shame to the operatives themselves, who, instead of uniting together to preserve with determination and zeal the interests of their Institution, allowed it through apathy to pass away. Is it too late to try again ? Unquestionably not.*

Another most important Institution, established in November, 1854, namely, the

WALSALL SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND ORNAMENTAL ART,

were it not for the philanthropic and enterprising spirit of its talented master and founder (Mr. W. Smith,) must also have, ere this, sunk into oblivion. The apathy so proverbial to Walsall, with reference to any project tending to mental culture and refinement, was never more forcibly exemplified than in the lamentable fact that this excellent establishment has been allowed—from its infancy to the present period—to struggle for a miserable existence, unnoticed and uncared for. Would it be believed that in a town like Walsall, with its 30,000 inhabitants, the students now attending the school do not exceed *twelve* in number ? The course of study is similar to that adopted by the Board of Trade, London, commencing with elementary drawing, and graduating to the study of light and shade, from the flat and round ; also studies from nature, combining the human figure both from the cast and life model. The terms appear to be extremely moderate, viz., 10s. 6d. per qr.

* Since writing the above, the Author has been informed that it is in contemplation to make available to the town, if possible, the various privileges arising from the "Public Library Act of 1855." A few spirited and philanthropic gentlemen have taken the matter in hand, and it is to be hoped that so noble an undertaking will meet with universal support.

for the elementary, and 10s. 6d. for the full course. It is also well known that the present Master studied under some of the most distinguished men of the day:† to wit, Mr. Hammersley, now Master of the School of Design, Manchester; Messrs. Richardson, Horseley, and Townsend, respective masters of ornamental, figure, and anatomical classes at the Somerset House Academy; and though last, not least, George Wallis, Esq., of the School of Ornamental Art, Birmingham. He has, furthermore, executed works for the late Welby Pugin, Esq., the celebrated Gothic architect; assisted in the sculpture decorations of the new Houses of Parliament, and received the Society of Arts medal from his Royal Highness, Prince Albert, for superior models. It is quite evident, therefore, that the hitherto non-appreciation of the project cannot be attributed either to the course of instruction adopted, the terms of tuition, or the disqualification of the master; it must, consequently, be inferred that the neglect arises either from pitiable apathy, or ignorance of the transcendent benefits derivable from such institutions.

The importance of such schools has been already fully developed in those places where they have been established,—London, Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley, and other important towns. In the Birmingham School there are now no less than 600 students,—a fact in itself sufficient to show the extent to which Art, in the present day, is made applicable to manufactures, and the consequent necessity that exists for its study and encouragement. Mrs. Ellis, in her excellent work, entitled “The Morning Call,” truly and beautifully observes,—“Amongst the various branches of utility connected with Art, will be universally acknowledged its intimate relation to our political and national welfare as a manufacturing and commercial country. In this sense the utility of Art is both understood and appreciated to its widest extent; for what would become of our trade and commerce if by any possibility the item of artistic embellishment should be all at once struck out of the manufactures of our country? The mere web of simple material retaining its native hue without adornment,

† Honourable mention has been already made of this gentleman in these pages, with reference to his design and execution of a monumental tablet recently raised to the memory of the late Rev. Francis Martyn, priest of St. Mary's Chapel.

might no doubt be sufficient to clothe our bodies, and supply our household exigencies ; but the fabric is no less fitted for this purpose, which bears upon it the impress of delicately woven flowers, or the tints of their natural beauty, disposed with all the ingenuity of a skilful hand, and a cultivated taste. And how many human beings are thus enabled to purchase by honest industry their daily bread ? The wool of the sheep, with its native brown and tawny tints, would no doubt serve to defend us from the cold ; and many an humble cottager or hardy mountaineer is still satisfied to wrap himself in clothing which has never travelled farther than the village loom, or been more elaborately wrought than by the industrious fingers at his own fireside ; but for a state of civilization like that which we have attained, how many grades of skilful handling are required before the same material reaches its highest degree of perfection, and hence, how large a portion of the community are maintained by refining upon the first simple processes of manufacture, all gradually advancing in the art of embellishment, and through each successive generation improving upon what their predecessors were able to accomplish ? The same may be said of every article of utility or ornament which we now regard as essentials of a comfortable and respectable mode of living. Art has fashioned all, according to some principle of beauty ; and as the appreciation of such principles is becoming higher, and the perception of them more clear and definite, a proportionably increased number of hands must necessarily be employed in working out these principles, as well as of ingenious and intelligent minds in devising new forms under which they may be exhibited. From the lowest range of mechanical operations, up to the highest exercise of genius, Art is then the chief agent, not only imparting pleasure to the rich and self-indulgent, but in affording occupation for the labourers and the poor." Hence, in a philanthropic and physical point of view, Schools of Design are entitled to the support and encouragement of all classes.

In all countries and all ages—even the most rude and barbarous—there appears to have existed in the human mind a powerful innate love for the exercise of Ornamental Art ; and in proportion as civilization advances, so does it become embodied in a deep, religious, and poetical feeling, bestowing an indefinable charm, which,

though impossible for words to convey, yet the hand of the Painter or Sculptor, when guided by the Poet's inspiration, can diffuse throughout all his works. Pure ideas, love, and devotion, are thus beautifully revealed, and exhibit, in the loftiest sense, the paramount utility of Art. Descending to a lower sphere, and taking a more business-like view of the question, it must be allowed that there are but few professions in which the practical knowledge of drawing or modelling is not found more or less useful. The artisan who is deficient in such acquirements may, after no inconsiderable trouble and loss of time, manage to get over his work after a fashion, and the employer, who is alike ignorant, can convey but a very indefinite idea of whatever design he may desire to have carried out; whereas, if each were educated in the principles of "Ornamental Art," as laid down in such schools, a better understanding, and more mutual feelings, conducive to the interests of both, would naturally exist between master and man.

It is fervently hoped that the gentry and inhabitants of Walsall will reflect seriously on those important considerations, and learn so to appreciate the many advantages derivable from the present little struggling "School of Design," as to rally round the standard of Art there unfurled, and with a hearty zeal and worthy determination, not allow so useful an Institution to fall for lack of adequate encouragement.

But to proceed with our tour. The large stuccoed building with the cupola on top, and nearly opposite to the Square (which we left in order to dilate upon the important subjects just noticed), is the BANK,* formerly known as "Forster's Bank," but now as a branch of the BIRMINGHAM BANKING COMPANY, under the management of Philip Perks Pratt, Esq. Between the Bank and the shop of Mr. Thomas Keel (hatter), is BEDLAM COURT, so named from a place of worship which once stood here, belonging to a sect called "Ranters." Of late years the name has been modified to that of *Meeting House Yard*. A little farther on, leading from Digbeth to *Mountrath Street*, is ADAM's Row, where stood the old Post Office. The next opening is LOWER HALL LANE, where stands a small chapel belonging to the denomination called the "Particular Baptists," and erected A.D. 1833. A few paces beyond

* This building was at one time the residence of the late Matthew Stubbs, Esq.

the entrance to Hall Lane, adjacent to the Bridge, and on the premises of Mr. J. R. Robinson, bookseller and printer, &c., is the only literary Institution of which the town can boast, viz.—

THE WALSALL LIBRARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTION,
which formerly occupied a commodious building in Lichfield Street (hereafter noticed). The original Library was established in 1801, and at present contains upwards of 3,000 volumes.*

The object of this Institution (according to the published abstract of its rules,) is—The promotion—on Christian principles—of literature, science, and art, by means of lectures, discussions, a library, a museum of natural history, antiquities, &c.; a laboratory and apparatus, and the publication of transactions.

The Institution comprises patrons, honorary members, fellows, and subscribers. A subscription of one pound per annum, payable in advance, or a donation of ten pounds, constitutes a member entitled to all the advantages of the Institution; or a subscription of fifteen shillings, admits to the Library and Museum. An annual subscriber of one pound is allowed the privilege of procuring admission, for members of his own family, to the lectures and museum, on payment of five shillings per annum for each person. The library is open till eight o'clock in the evening, for the purpose of reading, making extracts, &c., as well as taking out books.

The management is entrusted to a council, consisting of president, two vice-presidents, treasurer, two secretaries, and seven other members, elected by the subscribers from their own body at their annual meeting in September or October. All books are ordered by the council, on the proposition of members, made in due form in the proposal-book; but novels, plays, and political pamphlets are not admitted, except in special cases. Members may take out one entire work and a magazine at one time; but they are not at liberty either to transfer them to subscribers,

* According to Pierce's Directory for 1813, the first public library in Walsall was established on the 14th November, 1800, by the Rev. Thomas Bowen, for many years minister of the "Old Presbyterian Meeting House," and described as the inventor of an apparatus for drawing the longitudinal and latitudinal lines of maps with mathematical accuracy, as well as being the author of "Geographical Exercises," and other works. He found a room and librarian without any expense to the subscribers, till the Institution became too extensive to be confined to the accommodation thus afforded at his own residence, and was removed to premises in High Street, then occupied by Messrs. Valentine and Throsby, (printers, &c.) and now by Mr. William Harris, the publisher of this work.

or lend them to non-subscribers, and are responsible for their safe return.

In order to promote literary and scientific pursuits among persons unable to pay the before-mentioned rates of subscription, the advantages of the Institution are offered at the reduced scale of two shillings per quarter, or seven shillings and sixpence per annum, payable in advance; but such subscribers cannot take out any works until they have been in the library six calendar months for the use of members.

Nothing could possibly be better than the object of this Institution, which is highly deserving of support: the scheme, however, is of too exclusive a character to meet the wants of the masses. The same privileges if only extended so as to render them available to all sects and classes, would prove of inestimable value, and confer a most gracious boon on the rising generation.

Attached to Mr. Robinson's printing offices, at the corner of Bradford Street, is the *Walsall News Room*, which is supported by subscribers who pay a moderate sum annually.

We have now arrived at what may be termed the centre and most strikingly beautiful portion of the town, than which, no part has undergone a more complete metamorphosis, viz.,—

THE BRIDGE SQUARE.

Through the kind assistance of an old and experienced inhabitant* (who takes considerable interest in antiquarian researches, more especially with regard to anything appertaining to his native town) we are enabled to take a peep at this interesting locality as it appeared in former days. The brook course was at one period entirely exposed, and divided *Park Street* from Digbeth. The only means of approach was a small foot bridge, and it was no unfrequent occurrence for the water to flow over a great portion of the adjacent streets, rendering it necessary for ladies to be conveyed across on horseback. For this purpose ponies were kept in readiness on a spot adjoining the present entrance to the *New Inn*, Park Street, and ladies were wont to ride to and fro on pillion, paying for such accommodation "the small charge of one penny."†

* George Bradnock Stubbs, Esq., to whom the Author is indebted for much useful information.

† At the rear of the *New Inn* was at one time a celebrated Cock Pit. It is described in a *Walsall Directory* for 1813, as being the property of Mr. Charles Perks, very spacious, and then much frequented during the races, at which period only, it was used.

The level of Park Street and Digbeth (especially the former) was several feet (in places yards) below the present elevation, and houses now entered by a descent, were once approached by flights of steps. At *Townsend Bank* (where terminated the north side of the town) the carriage road was so much below the causeway, that a person could step from the latter, on to a waggon loaded with hay. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which this portion of the town has been raised, from the fact that there is a house now standing (in the occupation of a Mrs. Edwards, and adjoining the "Odd Fellows' Arms," formerly known as the "Farriers' Arms,") the upper chamber of which is on a line with the footpath.

Within a few feet of the *Blue Coat and National Schools* stood the ancient *Corn Mill*, described in a curious document, (bearing date 19th Richard II.,) as "The Lord's Mills."* This was the property of the Lord of the Manor, to whom, since the removal of the building, in or about 1813, the Corporation have paid, and still pay (by way of acknowledgement of his claim) a nominal rental of two shillings per annum.

For some years previous to its demolition this antique fabric was occupied as a blacksmith's shop by one Chadwick.† The old materials were sold by auction, and were bought by a person named Barker, for the sum of £31. At this period Digbeth united with *Bridge Street*, at a point nearly parallel with the corner of Bradford Street.

At the corner of Bridge Street, on the site now occupied by the *Fire Engine Station*,‡ and extending beyond the present causeway, was an open watering place for horses. This formed a portion of the *Millrace*, and was covered over in 1815, or thereabouts,—a circumstance which, it is said, gave rise to no small amount of grumbling on the part of some of the inhabitants, who were, in consequence, more or less inconvenienced. Had the result been otherwise, it would certainly have been singular; for men are ever to be found most active in pointing out, and agitating for, improvements; but to find one ready to make the slightest personal sacrifice *pro bono publico*, is as rare an occurrence as to see "a dead ass," or

* This is the same document referred to in Note 2, p. 26, and a copy of which will be found in the Appendix.

† Father of the late Mrs. Eld, who formerly kept the Stork Hotel.
This Engine Station is a branch of the Birmingham Fire Office.

"a tinker's wedding;" and as difficult to find as—What? Why, *punctuality in a publisher!*

Numerous improvements followed, and in 1851 the Square was enlarged to its present size by arching over a considerable portion of the water course, where some good houses and shops have since been erected, one of which is now the Post Office, and adjoins an ornamental wall, that encloses the garden of a large and handsome residence, the property of John Day, Esq., surgeon. The principal object of attraction is

THE GEORGE HOTEL.

This is a spacious edifice of imposing grandeur, presenting in front a noble portico, supported by six Grecian columns, on an elevation of raised steps.* The interior is on an extensive scale, and embraces a commodious *Assembly Room*, fitted up in superior style, with cut glass chandeliers, &c., and an orchestra. This room was added to the hotel in 1793, and will admit of 50 couples to dance without inconvenience. The establishment has been in the hands of the family of the present proprietor, Mr. Richard Moore Fletcher, nearly three quarters of a century. Next to the hotel are

THE BLUE COAT AND NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

These schools were rebuilt and enlarged to their present dimensions, and the adjoining residences, for the master and mistress, were erected in 1826, at the cost of £1,200.† The entrance is adorned on either side with a niche, each containing a statue, one representing a boy, and the other a girl, in the costume of the original school. They were executed by a native sculptor, and purchased with an unappropriated fund raised for the presentation of a piece of plate to Queen Caroline, who died before the intention could be carried into effect. In the centre of the building is a handsome illuminated clock.

* These massive stone pillars were purchased in 1822, of the Marquis of Donegal, of Fisherwick Hall, for a mere trifle; less than the actual cost of their conveyance. They had lain for so many years in disuse, that when bought, they were completely covered with moss. Originally the front entrance to the hotel was situate in Digbeth, nearly opposite to Coate's confectionary establishment.

† In aid of the fund for re-building and enlarging these schools, a sermon was preached in St. Matthew's Church, Dec. 4th, 1826, by the Rev. Luke Booker, L.L.D., F.R.S., Vicar of Dudley, and a considerable sum was thereby raised. Seven United Lodges walked in grand procession to the church, which was so crowded on the occasion that a portion of the gallery nearly gave way to the pressure, so that it was afterwards found necessary to erect strong iron pillars, as an additional support. Medals were struck off in commemoration of the event, one of which has been in the Author's possession.

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL is of uncertain origin, and is principally supported by subscriptions and collections after annual sermons ; it is, however, possessed of the following sources of permanent income viz., £10 per annum from the Corporation, as the interest of £300 left by Mrs. Crump, in 1848 ; and of £200 left by Mrs. Curtis, in 1849 ; also the rent of a piece of land at Queen's Cross, near Dudley, the gift of Mr. John Taylor, and paying £4 4s. annually. The site on which the present building stands, was purchased by the trustees, out of the School funds.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL was established in 1820, and is associated with the Blue Coat School. About 300 children is the average attendance, 20 of whom, of either sex, are clothed and educated at the expense of the charity.

Adjacent to Bridge Square, in the centre of a neat plantation, skirted on one side by a pleasant meadow, through which the running brook unceasingly continues its monotonous course, and protected on the other by a row of handsome stuccoed dwellings, called *St. Paul's Close*, stands the sacred edifice from which the latter derives its appellation—

ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL.

This imposing Grecian structure is an episcopal place of worship, and was erected in 1826, at the cost of £3,000, by the Governors of the Free Grammar School, in whom the patronage is vested. The windows are composed of ground and stained glass ; the principal one exhibits a beautifully-executed figure of St. Paul. The living is a curacy, and the head master of the school (the Rev. J. B. Pugh) is the officiating minister, with a stipend of £50 per annum. The handsome detached building in the beautiful grounds which adorn the east end of the chapel, is the residence of C. F. Darwall, Esq.

THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL,

in Bridge Street, is the next object worthy of notice. It is a large substantial building, containing about 1000 sittings, and was erected in 1790, upon a site of land purchased by public subscription, and the sale of an old chapel in Dudley Street. There are attached two Sabbath schools, a girls' school and infant school, all of which are well attended. The Rev. Alexander Gordon, L.L.D., is the present

pastor: he entered upon his ministry here in 1846. There is a large and fine-toned organ in this chapel.

The houses in BRIDGE STREET are spacious and well built, and with the exception of a few private residences and factors' warehouses,* are chiefly occupied as lawyers' chambers. There are two banks here, one belonging to *Henry Duignan, Son, and Company*; and the other the *Savings Bank*. The latter was established in 1825, and in November, 1854, had deposits amounting to £45,670 8s. 2d., belonging to 1,586 private individuals, 16 charitable, and 25 friendly societies. The Right Hon. the Earl of Bradford is the president; the Right Hon. Lord Hatherton, and Sir Francis Scott, vice-presidents; secretary, Mr. Joseph H. Curtis. This bank is open every Monday, from twelve till two o'clock.

We now enter upon a street of remarkable beauty, and not only the most picturesque, but the most fashionable portion of the town, LICHFIELD STREET. It leads from Bridge Street to the Lichfield Road, and was opened in lieu of an ancient but inconvenient road from Lower Rushall Street. This may be reckoned as amongst the principal improvements effected under the "Improvement Act," obtained in 1824. The first object here calculated to arrest attention, is a large quadrangular edifice, with a handsome Doric portico, called

ST. MATTHEW'S HALL.

It is a detached building, stuccoed in imitation of stone, and enclosed in front by a neat iron palisading. In the rear is an extensive garden, the whole occupying 1179 square yards of land. This structure was erected in 1831, at the cost of £1,600, in £10 shares, for a *Public Library, &c.*, but the undertaking (mainly attributable to that unfortunate division of class and exclusive principle already alluded to, and which so militates against the success of any institution in Walsall) soon proved a complete failure; the rate of subscription, both to the library and reading-room, being in itself sufficient to exclude the public generally, from any participation in its benefits.

The building (which remained for some years unoccupied) ultimately fell into a dilapidated condition, and on the 19th May, 1847, it was resolved at a meeting of the shareholders, that the

* Those of Messrs. Wm. and Charles Brooks, and Henry Brace, may be considered the most extensive.

land, building, and chattels therein, should be offered for public competition in two months from that date. Accordingly, on the 16th July following, the property was offered by public auction, and Mr. F. Empson, of Birmingham, architect (as agent for the present owner, C. F. Darwall, Esq.) was the highest bidder, and was declared the purchaser, at £620. From a variety of causes, the completion of the purchase was delayed till the 23rd June, 1853, when, in consequence of a threatened suit in Chancery, the surviving trustees, John Forster, Richard Jesson, and G. B. Stubbs, Esqrs., deemed it advisable to bring the matter to a close, and it was given up to the buyer at the price before stated.

In the deed of conveyance by the trustees to the present owner, it is recited "That no interest or dividend was ever paid to the shareholders, but an amount of £95 12s. 2d. deposited in the Walsall Branch of the Birmingham Banking Company, to the credit of the trustees. That sums had been received for rental derived from a portion of the building in the occupation of the Savings Bank, but these had been expended from time to time in repairs, &c." The entire amount divided amongst the shareholders, after the expenses of sale, and including the money alluded to in the Bank, was £694 17s. 10d.—just 10s. 2d. in the pound.

Since Mr. Darwall came into possession of the property, the building has been thoroughly renovated, and is now in very nice order. On the ground floor are the *County Court Offices*, and a large room suitable for lectures, &c. The upper story embraces a suite of spacious and lofty apartments, one of which is lighted by a handsome central dome, and is principally used as a *Freemasons' Hall*, but occasionally for musical entertainments, and other public purposes.

The private dwellings in this locality are extremely beautiful, especially in and about *Hatherton Place* (a pleasant little street branching off on the north, and leading to *Hatherton Street* and *Forster Street*). Here are also the extensive warehouses of Hill, Brothers, and Messrs. Chawner and Newman, merchants. But the next public building of importance is

THE ROYAL FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

This excellent Institution was founded by Queen Mary, in the first year of her reign, by letters patent under the Great Seal of England,

dated 2nd July, 1554, by which it was granted, willed, and ordained that, "There should be one Grammar School in Walsall, in the county of Stafford, which should be called the Free Grammar School of Queen Mary.* And that ten of the more discreet and honest inhabitants of Walsall be governors and a body corporate, with power to hold lands, elect a master and usher," &c. &c. It was also endowed with land at Woodend, Bloxwich, Shelfield, Norton, and Tipton, which now consists of 298 acres, producing an annual rental of £418. The property of the charity has undergone many changes, and its objects have also been varied by an *Act* of Parliament, passed in 1797, "for enabling the Governors to sell certain mines under part of their lands, as well as to sell and exchange certain lands for the purpose of extending the benefits of the school. Also for enlarging the trust and powers of the said Governors, and for enabling them to build a chapel; to be in their patronage, and under the pastoral care of the Master of the Grammar School; to establish as many school-houses and school-rooms in convenient situations in the parish, as they should think necessary; and to direct how many boys and girls should be admitted; what they should be taught; and how many to be maintained, clothed, and put out apprentices; to appoint masters and mistresses from time to time; to teach boys and girls of the parish of Walsall in reading, writing, knitting, sewing, arithmetic, mathematics, &c.; with a proviso, that there should be always one head master and one usher, to teach the classics in conformity with the letters patent of Queen Mary, such head master to be a clergyman of the Church of England, in priest's orders, and a graduate of one of the Universities, and have, in addition to his school salary, an annual stipend of £50 as minister of the chapel.† The benefits of this Institution are exclusively confined to boys residing in the parish, and who attend the worship and services of the Established Church of England.‡

There are two departments connected with the Institution, viz., the *Grammar* and *Commercial*. The former, previous to the

* Such is the account generally given and received, with reference to the origin of the Institution. There appears, however, but little doubt that the grant had been originally made by Edward VI., and was merely confirmed by Queen Mary.

+ See description of Chapel (St. Paul's) p. 50.

‡ This most illiberal restriction was secured by the *Act* of 1797.

erection of the present building, in 1847, was conducted in Park Street; and the latter, in St. Matthew's churchyard. In the *Grammar School* 66 boys are admitted, and in the *Commercial* 84 boys.

The elegant and commodious structure now under notice is in the Elizabethan style, and beautifully situated. It comprises spacious class rooms, and three handsome residences for the first, second, and third masters. There are large gardens, and an extensive play-ground attached. The ground in front of the building is planted with shrubs and evergreens, interspersed with choice flowers, the whole laid out with exquisite taste.

The freedom of these schools extends to the whole parish for boys eight years of age and upwards, who are able to read, spell, and write. Parents can select the school into which they wish their children to enter; every boy is required to wear the cap appointed for the school, (which is similar to the caps worn at the Universities) and to attend Divine service on Sundays at the chapel. In the Grammar School the scheme of instruction embraces Latin, Greek, Ancient and Modern History and Geography, English Grammar, Composition, Writing, Arithmetic, Mathematics, General Science, &c. That in the Commercial School is the same, with the exception of Classics, Ancient History, and Ancient Geography.

The following highly satisfactory report was made by the Master of the *Grammar School*, in Birmingham, at the last Midsummer examination :—

“ *To the Governors of the Free Grammar School of Queen Mary, at Walsall.* ”

“ GENTLEMEN,—

“ Having been requested to examine the Classes at Walsall Grammar School on the 8th instant, I have much pleasure in laying before you the result of that inquiry, and bearing my very favourable testimony to their proficiency.

“ The boys of the 1st class acquitted themselves most satisfactorily, construing portions of the best classical authors with much accuracy and considerable taste.

“ The 2nd and 3rd classes also rendered very creditably, the one, parts of Sallust and Xenophon, the other, Arnold’s *Historia Antiqua* and Edward’s Greek Reader.

“ The 4th class merits especial commendation. Their books had evidently been prepared most carefully, and their very good translation and parsing showed that no pains had been spared to ground them thoroughly in the subjects of their examination. I think also that the 5th and 6th classes passed an examination

fully as satisfactory as could be expected from boys of their age and standing, and that their attainments may safely be compared with those of similar classes in other schools.

" In answer to some general questions in history and geography, I received some papers much above the average, of which I cannot speak too highly. The extent and accuracy of information displayed in them was very creditable.

" I must beg leave to add, that I was extremely pleased by the orderly behaviour and general good tone of the boys ; proving (as it plainly does) that the formation of habits is not subordinate to the cultivation of the intellect.

" I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

" Your obedient Servant,

" THOMAS PRICE, M.A.,

" Assistant Master in King Edward VI.

" June, 12th, 1855."

" Grammar School, Birmingham."

THE TERCENTENARY of the foundation of this Institution was commemorated on the 4th July, 1854 ; and as a memorial of that great and interesting festival, it was proposed to found an exhibition, open to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, for the pupils educated on the foundation. This laudable proposition originated entirely with former pupils of the school, who liberally came forward with their subscriptions for the purpose. The scheme had received the unqualified sanction of the Bishop of Lichfield, (as official visitor of the school), of the Governors, and of the Head Master. From £750 to £1000 would (it was estimated) be the sum required ; and through the exertions of the Committee appointed at a preliminary meeting on the 16th May previous, no less than £650 had been subscribed.

The bells of the fine old Parish Church opened with merry peals the day's festivities, which they continued to enliven throughout, with their cheerful strains. At one o'clock in the afternoon a noble baron of beef, and a goodly supply of other edibles, were served up in the large school room, where the pupils, numbering 125, sat down to dinner. Smoking plump plum-puddings, also made their appearance in due time ; and it is needless to add, that ample justice was done to the good old English fare. At a quarter before three o'clock the boys, with the Mayor, (Samuel Lowe, Esq.,) the Masters and Governors of the school, the Clergy, and most of the principal inhabitants of the locality, walked in procession to St. Paul's Chapel, where Divine service was performed. Prayers

having been read by the Rev. J. B. Pugh, an impressive discourse was delivered by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, from Acts xvii. 15 : " And they that conducted Paul brought him to Athens." At five o'clock the Governors and visitors sat down to a sumptuous collation, in the noble school room, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion. Large stands of fine green-house plants were placed at either end, and from the walls were suspended a number of excellent and interesting pictures, kindly lent by H. Fletcher, H. C. Windle, and R. Jesson, Esqrs. The chair was occupied by the senior Governor, H. C. Windle, Esq., who was supported on his right by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese ; and on his left, by the Rev. J. B. Pugh, head master of the school.

After the removal of the cloth, the pupils were conducted into the room, and were each helped to a glass of wine, in which to drink the health of her Majesty. The Royal toast was then given by the Chairman, and drunk with the greatest enthusiasm, followed by the whole company singing the National Anthem. " The Lord Bishop of the Diocese," " The late and present Masters of the School," and other appropriate toasts were also given in due course. That of " The Governors of the Institution " was proposed by the Rev. J. B. Owen (late of Bilston), in a long address of great eloquence, which concluded thus :—" Nero, who was execrated by the world, found, it was said, some one to love him ; for, in the language of Byron,

" When Nero died beneath the curse of Rome,
Some hand unseen strewed flowers on his tomb."

So, with Queen Mary, the people of Walsall could strew flowers on her tomb, and say that if she burnt 280 of her subjects, she founded a school for Walsall."

A Conversazione, attended by about 150 ladies and gentlemen, and enlivened by instrumental and vocal music, terminated the important and interesting proceedings.

In front of the Grammar School is *Hatherton Lake*, a large sheet of water of considerable depth, and originally a stone quarry. In the summer of 1847 a gentleman named Harvey (then Mayor of Walsall) was drowned here, it is supposed whilst bathing,—a supposition which is strengthened, not only by the fact that he had been heard to speak very highly of the benefits derivable from

immersion in mineral waters, but that his clothes were found on the bank. This sad catastrophe was immediately followed by another, a person named Oakley having, on the very same day (through the capsizing of a boat whilst searching for the body), met with a similar fate. On the northern border of this lake, at the top of Lichfield Street, is a range of villa residences, recently erected by Mr. H. Farrington, and called "Hatherton Lake Villas." They are delightfully situated, and from their elevated position, elegance of style, and tastefully-arranged pleasure grounds, form a peculiarly attractive feature in the surrounding landscape.

Proceeding from the Grammar School in a north-westerly direction, through **FORSTER STREET**, and traversing for about a quarter of a mile a locality where new streets and habitations are daily springing up on every side, we cross the South Staffordshire Railway, and leaving to our left the populous district, called the **WISEMORE**, we arrive within a short distance of the Tollgate,* at the top of **STAFFORD STREET**, a locality which has grown within the last five years to a wonderful extent. Here stands out in bold relief

ST. PETER'S CHURCH.

This edifice, which is composed of brick and stone, is in the early English style. It has a quadrangular tower at the east end, surmounted with pinnacles, and was erected in 1844, at the cost of £5000, including a neat parsonage. There are 1440 sittings, of which about one half are free. It was built by subscription, and grants from the Church Building Society. The site was a gift from Lord Hatherton; the Earl of Bradford presented a sum of £1000, as well as £500 towards the endowment. Amongst other contributions were £600 by the late C. S. Forster, Esq., and £200 by John Forster, Esq. There are three schools connected with this church, and supported by subscriptions, sermons, and the payment of twopence per week by each scholar. The number of boys, girls, and infants, who attend, average 450. The living, (which is in the patronage of the Vicar of Walsall,) is a *perpetual curacy*, valued at £150. The Rev. C. Dunn, M.A., is the present incumbent.

* Twelve or fifteen years ago the Tollgate was situate between Townsend Bank and Blue Lane, and what is now Stafford Street, was then an open country.

At a short distance from St. Peter's Church, on the opposite side, is a *Wesleyan Chapel*,—a plain, but suitable building, erected in the Wesleyan Centenary. And a little further on, towards the town, stands

CHRIST'S CHAPEL.

This neat stuccoed edifice—commonly called the *Unitarian Meeting House*—was erected in 1827, in lieu of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, in Bank Court, (better known of late years as Cox's Court), High Street, adjoining the shop of Mr. Charles Dixon, boot and shoe maker. During the religious feuds created by Sacheverel, when George I. ascended the throne (1714) this Meeting House (which had been for sixty years the only dissenting place of worship in the town), was entirely demolished by a mob. The minister at that time was the Rev. John Godby, of the University of Leyden, who harangued the assailants, and earnestly begged of them to abandon their intention of destroying the building. They assured him that from personal respect he should not himself be injured, but was forced to depart, when the work of destruction commenced, and the sacred pile was soon levelled to the ground. It was rebuilt by Government A.D. 1715.

Connected with the present Chapel there is a good school, to which certain freehold land, producing an annual rental of £25, was bequeathed by one George Fowler in 1699, and called the *Dissenters' School Charity*.* The school is open on Sundays, morning and afternoon ; and on Thursdays, afternoon and evening.

The present school room is incapable of accommodating the number of children who attend on Sundays, so that it has become necessary to hold the school in the chapel : an enlargement of the building is therefore in contemplation. The minister and members of the congregation are the teachers. The present pastor is the Rev. Edward Myres.

Adjacent to Christ's Chapel, is *Ebenezer Chapel*, a place of worship belonging to the Baptist denomination : a portion of the congregation originally belonged to the "Baptist Chapel," Goodall Street (*vide p. 35*). We shall now cross over to *Wolverhampton Road*, in order to notice

THE NEW GAS WORKS.

They were built in 1850, under the new "Improvement Act,"

*The particulars of this Charity will be found under the head of "Inquiry into the Charities."

obtained that year by the Corporation, and cost 5,000*l.* They are in the management of the Commissioners, and are sufficiently extensive (at least so one would imagine) to supply the town amply; it is evident however, that the inhabitants are decidedly more indebted to her gracious ladyship the Moon, and her twinkling attendants, than to the corporate works in question. Whether this arises from parsimony, mismanagement, or from a sincere spirit of economy and retrenchment on the part of the local authorities, we are unable to say; if the former, we trust that some *light* will ere long be thrown upon the *subject*; and if the latter, we shall be so far reasonable and conscientious, as to content ourselves with remaining not only quiescent, but in the *dark*.

THE UNION WORKHOUSE.

This indispensable but not very enviable establishment is situate in *Pleck Lane*, about a quarter of a mile from the town. It is a large and substantial structure, in the Elizabethan style, and was erected in 1838, at the cost of 7,600*l.* In 1842, the accommodation proving insufficient, the building was enlarged to its present size, so that there is now room for 450 paupers. Of the Board of Guardians four are elected for the Borough, and six for the Foreign. By a memorandum in the vestry book, it would appear that there had been no workhouse in the town previous to the year 1727;* yet Pearce gives the following, as a verbatim copy of an inscription on a tablet in the old workhouse building:—

“These houses were bought of Mr. Thomas Harris, of Worcester, by the Corporation, for the use of the poor of Walsall; the Mayor paying yearly to the organist 4*l.* per annum. In the mayoralty of Richard Burrows, A.D. 1717.”†

It is difficult to account for this discrepancy of dates; there is, however, sufficient evidence to prove that a building was conveyed to the Corporation by one Thomas Harris, (subject to an annual

* Copy of memorandum:—“It is agreed upon by a vestry this 11th day of June, 1727, appointed and held in the parish church of Walsall, that a workhouse shall be built; as witness our hands” (Signed)

J. ETHELINGER, Mayor. JOHN Moss, Vicar.

THOMAS NICHOLS,	} Churchwardens.	WILLIAM COTTERELL,	} Overseers.
HENRY READ,		SAMUEL MARTYN,	

&c., &c., &c., &c.

+ Pearce's Directory, p. 126.

payment of 4*l.* for the benefit of the organist of the parish church,) which the Corporation gave up for the use of the poor, and further, that the building in question (which occupied a site near St. Matthew's churchyard, at the top of Hill Street) was partly pulled down and rebuilt by the Overseers in 1799.* This became the subject of a suit in Chancery, and was sold under an order of the Court A.D. 1846. It is only reasonable therefore to infer, either that there is an error in the dates given, or (which is most probable) that the registry in the vestry book had reference to the enlargement or rebuilding of the premises in question.

The old building is described as containing a dining room, forty-six feet long, and fifteen wide, with two lodging rooms over, of the same dimensions; also, a large apartment in which the poor were employed in spinning linen, &c., for their own wear. Two hundred and ten poor persons were here lodged in the year 1801.

According to the report of the poor law board for 1854, the population of Walsall Union was forty thousand, and the receipts from the poor rate were 10,893*l.* 8*s.* There was expended for indoor maintenance 982*l.* 6*s.* Out-door relief 2,987*l.* 14*s.* Salaries and rations of officers 849*l.* 15*s.* Thus stands on record, the startling fact, that the salaries and rations of officers amounted in one year, to within 132*l.* 11*s.* of the total cost of the indoor maintenance of the poor! Another item amounting to 769*l.* 3*s.* appears on the same balance sheet, under the convenient but rather indefinite term "other expenses." This forcibly reminds one of a certain Churchwarden, who, being once put to his wit's end how to account in his balance sheet for a deficiency of 40*l.*, quietly settled the matter by making the following entry:—"Paid for men, beer, and other things 40*l.*"

The total expenditure for the poor is given as 5,913*l.* 3*s.*, while the total receipts amount to 10,883*l.* 8*s.* The balance is accounted for in the borough rates, which are mixed up and collected with the poor rate, a plan decidedly objectionable. Why not keep the poor rates separate and distinct from municipal purposes, and thus give every ratepayer the opportunity of knowing distinctly how much he is paying for each? No rate is so cheerfully paid as that

* The overseers were Samuel Fletcher and Richard Walthew.

for the support of the poor, but it is hardly right to take advantage of this, and get folks to pay another rate under that title. Walsall Union extends over an area of thirty-one square miles.

The present officers are:—Henry Duignan, Esq., *Union Clerk and Superintendent Registrar*; the Rev. M. Hatheway, *Chaplain*; John Burton, Esq., M.D., *Medical Officer*; Mr. Joseph Bytheway, *Relieving Officer*; and Messrs. William Totty and John Osbourn, *Collectors of Poor Rates*.

Bidding adieu to the workhouse, and crossing over a little to the left, we enter BRIDGEMAN STREET by *James's Foundry*. This is a new street of considerable length, leading to the race course, where it is supported on the right, by BRIDGMAN TERRACE,—a handsome row of fashionable houses with stucco fronts, one of which, is the residence of Charles Forster, Esq., M.P.,—and on the left by STATION STREET, another new street, which connects Bridgeman Street with Park Street, and comprises a long range of neat, uniform buildings, principally private dwellings. About midway is a large Inn and Posting House, kept by Mr. Charles Brown, and called the RAILWAY COMMERCIAL INN, not far from which another spacious Hotel is now in course of erection. At the rear are detached rows of lofty and well lighted shopping. The greater portion of this property belongs to Mr. William Stanley, of Park Street, Spur Maker. The grand centre of attraction here, and from which the street derives its name, is

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE RAILWAY STATION.

What a wonderful age is this nineteenth century! when men paint portraits with the sunbeams, travel by steam, and actually hold converse by lightening. To our forefathers such discoveries would have seemed the wonders of enchantment. How singularly far doth these extraordinary inventions go towards the realization of an extravagant prayer once offered by two lovers?

“ Ye gods! annihilate but time and space ! ”

The earliest railways were those used in transporting from mines the mineral products. The first locomotive was invented by Mr. George Stevenson, and the first essay for public purposes was made on the Stockton and Darlington Railway. The grand era, however

dates from the opening of the *Liverpool and Manchester line*, in 1830. With what rapid and gigantic strides railway communication has since advanced may be imagined from the astounding facts, that in 1850 it was computed the locomotive passed over every day a distance nearly four and a half times the circumference of the globe! and no fewer than 6,464 miles of railway were under traffic.* The number of engines working was 2,436; the quantity of coke consumed within the year, 627,528 tons; the quantity of coal, 896,466 tons; the total distance run 40,161,850 miles; and the average distance per day, 110,833 miles.

The South Staffordshire Railway passes through the very heart of Walsall. The station is an exceedingly handsome structure, in the Elizabethan style, and highly ornamental to the town.

The line was incorporated by 9 and 10 Vic., 3rd August, 1846, being an amalgamation under those acts, of the South Staffordshire Junction, the Trent Valley, Midland, and Grand Junction; the object being a line from Dudley, (in conjunction with the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton), intersecting the late Grand Junction, at Bescot, and terminating at Rushall, in connection with the Birmingham and Derby, with a branch to Great Bridge. It was completed to Dudley in 1849, and by arrangements with the London and North Western Company, was also extended to Birmingham, Vauxhall Station having been purchased for head quarters, with power to run into the Birmingham central station. The line is forty miles in length, and may be considered the highway of the West, by Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton; from Worcester through Dudley, to the North; and by the Portobello branch from Wolverhampton through the centre of the iron district, where branches shoot off to all the important works on the route. Along the banks of this line exists for miles an uninterrupted bed of coal, extending under a considerable portion of *Cannock Chase*, (the manorial demesne of the Marquis of Anglesea), where a rich vein of mineral property has been recently discovered.† By an act of 1850, 13 and 14 Vic., powers were granted to lease this railway, and it was accordingly leased to Mr. John Robinson McClean, C.E.,

* The number now open is 6,934.

† This wide heath is supposed to have been the Druid centre of Britain.

for twenty-one years, commencing 1st August, 1850, for a clear dividend (less income tax) of two per cent on the then called up capital of 669,375*l.* for the first year, (equal to 8*l.* 10*s.* per share), and four per cent thereafter, with a contingent increase of four-and-a-half per cent after the first eight years, and of five per cent after the first fourteen years; the lessee depositing 10,000*l.* as security for the fulfilment of the contract, and bearing the cost of maintenance and restorations, &c., paying annually a sum of 400*l.* as a sinking fund as regards the locomotive stock, and 1,000*l.* with respect to rails, chairs, and sleepers; also, 600*l.* for offices, and general charges.* In 1851 an act was obtained authorising the company to construct a branch to Tipton, to join the *Stour Valley*, and working arrangements with respect thereto were made with the London and North Western Company.

The following extensions were obtained during the last two sessions, viz., a branch to Cannock, seven miles and three furlongs, and another to Norton, three miles, the outlay for which, for a double line was estimated at 120,000*l.*, to be met by the London and North Western paying up calls on its subscribed shares, which extend to 40,000*l.*, and by unexhausted borrowing powers amounting to 96,000*l.* The objects procured last session, and to be carried into effect, are:—additional lands at Wichnor joint station at Dudley; increase of capital; arrangements with the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton, the London and North Western; and amendments of acts. The branches comprise a line to commence at or near the Wednesbry station, and terminate by a junction with the London and North Western, near the Darlaston passenger station; and another commencing also at Wednesbury, and terminating by a junction with the Stour Valley, near the station at Tipton. Powers have also been granted to enable the South Staffordshire Company and their lessees, and the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton, to enter into all such contracts as they may think fit in respect of the working and use by the South Staffordshire or their lessees, of the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton, or any part or parts thereof, and the payment and also apportionment of the tolls, rates, and duties, leviable

* Bradshaw's Railway Manual, p. 258.

in respect of traffic; and further to enable the London and North Western and South Staffordshire, and their lessees, to carry into effect similar regulations, as well as, to legalise and confirm certain agreements between the two last mentioned companies, as to the use of portions of the London and North Western, and the Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Stour Valley, and as to the division and apportionment of the tolls leviable in respect of the traffic on such portions.

The line is reported to be in a most efficient state of repair. The lease is being carried out in the most punctual manner, and the traffic has realised the most sanguine expectations of the shareholders.

Number of directors:—maximum, 18; minimum, 5; present board, 12. Two are nominated by the London and North Western and one by the Midland, who receive 2*l.* for each attendance. Qualification, fifty shares.

The accounts are made up to 31st January and 31st July, and dividends are payable 1st March and 1st September yearly, at four per cent. per annum. The ordinary meetings are held in February and August in each year. Certificates are not required to accompany transfer deeds. Registration fee, 2*s.* 6*d.* each deed.

The following have been the receipts on capital account up to 31st July last:—deposit and first call, 204,714*l.* 18*s.* 8*d.*; second call, 109,488*l.* 12*s.*; third call, 117,138*l.* 10*s.*; fourth, 78,150*l.*; fifth, 78,144*l.*; sixth, 78,145*l.*; seventh, 78,028*l.*; receipts on account of calls, 609*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.*; profit on shares sold, 161*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*; bonds, 218,265*l.*; rents, 423*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*; traffic, 2,246*l.* 12*s.*

Total.....	965,515	15	1
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Balance.....	46,945	3	7
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Total.....	£ 1,012,460	18	8
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The total capital authorised, amounts to 945,000*l.*, in 12*l.* shares, 9*l.* 10*s.* paid, and 315,000*l.* loans; total, 1,260,000. The London and North Western hold 12,500 shares; the Midland 6,000, and the Birmingham canal 3,000.

The *Goods Station* adjoins the passenger station, at which two

commodious *Refreshment rooms* have recently been opened, thereby adding much to the convenience and comforts of travellers.*

In Walsall and the surrounding neighbourhood are various provident institutions, *Lodges of Odd Fellows, Sick Clubs, Gift and other Benefit Societies*, too numerous for detail within the limits of the present work. The *Church of England Benefit Society* numbers nearly 200 members, and possesses a fund of more than 300*l.* The principal institutions are the *Permanent Building Society, the Freehold Land Society, the Ratepayers' Protection Society, and the Walsall, and Bloxwich Horticultural Societies*. These we shall now proceed to notice in rotation, commencing with

THE WALSALL PERMANENT BENEFIT BUILDING AND INVESTMENT SOCIETY.

This institution was established in the year 1847, and has gradually increased in the number of its members and in the capital employed. The liability and assets account brought before the members at their general annual meeting in April last, showed the profits realized in the three years to be 277*l. 3d.* These are added to the capital stock of each member, in proportion to his vested interest in the society, and before the profits are ascertained. Interest upon every amount is added at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum ; such members therefore receive upwards of 6 per cent. for their investments.

Those who are depositors only, that is, upon the Savings Banks' principle, investing a few shillings or pounds at different times, as may be convenient to themselves, are allowed 5 per cent. interest thereon, the whole of which may be withdrawn on giving 14 days' notice, thus giving to the careful and prudent 2 per cent. more than the Savings Bank Government allowance of 3 per cent.

The profits alluded to are formed in this way. Certain members desirous to build or purchase, obtain an advance of money, and execute a deed to repay the same by certain monthly or quarterly instalments, (according to the Tables shown in the printed Rules)

* The proprietor of the Refreshment rooms, Mr. E. W. Fenton, has it in contemplation to open similar accommodation at Dudley Port Station.

for 5, 7, 10, 12 or 14 years. These repayments soon accumulate, like compound interest, to a sufficient sum to supply another borrowing member, and then another and another, so that the capital is constantly circulating and giving increased interest or profits for division amongst the members every three years; for instance, if 100 persons in this way repay the society 30s. per month, the sum of 150*l.* may be advanced per month to other borrowing members, each returning a portion of the capital he borrowed monthly, so that, in fact, the original capital by circulating through an increased number of hands forms the profits to be shared.

Those ascertained and shared in the year 1852, amounted to 325*l.* 19s. 1*d.*, after allowing to each member and depositor 5 per cent. upon investments.

Building Societies are favoured by the legislature under the Friendly Societies' Acts.

The members are not liable to any stamp duty whatever, so that the expenses to be paid by the borrowing member are trifling compared with the ruinous charges incurred by private mortgages.

They can withdraw at any time after giving notice, the mortgages are valued without difficulty—and paid off or transferred as may be desired, to suit the enterprise or advantages of the member in each case.

In some Building Societies the Rules permit the amount which the directors have ready for investment to be put up by auction to the highest bidder, whereby large profits are formed for one portion of the members at the extravagant cost of the other, but this kind of gambling forms no feature in the Walsall Society's Rules, they have been carefully drawn and certified by Arthur Scratchley, Esq., M.A., the eminent actuary, who has published many editions of his treatise upon Benefit Building Societies.

The Trustees are, Charles Forster, Esq., M.P., for the borough of Walsall, Messrs. John B. Adams and Thomas Pool Brettell; and the Directors are elected from the members at the annual meetings in April, one-third of them retiring yearly.

The scope of the Society's action is not confined to Walsall, but extends also to Darlaston, Wednesbury, and the surrounding places.

Such societies may be commended to the public, and especially to the working classes, for whose benefit they were designed, as a safe and lucrative mode of investing small earnings or unemployed capital, whilst they offer the means of every man becoming his own landlord, and of possessing property which, without such an institution a great number of its members could never enjoy.

WALSALL FREEHOLD LAND SOCIETY.

Of the several institutions designed for the elevation and improvement of the labouring classes, none can be said to embrace a more eligible sphere of operation, or have arrived at greater pre-eminence than "Freehold Land Societies." The first of these associations was established in Birmingham A.D. 1848 ; they now spread over the entire kingdom, and have produced, morally, socially, and politically, the most incalculable results. In Birmingham alone, upwards of 100,000*l.* annually are paid into these societies, a considerable portion of which sum is doubtless saved from drink and dissipation.

The vast difference existing between the *wholesale* and *retail* prices of "Freehold Land," is almost incredible; land selling at 3*s. 4d.* and 3*s. 6d.* per yard *retail*, has actually been purchased by societies as low as 1*s. 1d. wholesale*, and in not a few instances, has become soon afterwards, worth double the retail value. The leading characteristic therefore of such institutions is, the plan of forming one common fund, by the united contributions of members, and by means of this accumulation, to purchase large tracts of eligible building land, and retail the same to the members at the *wholesale* price, in lots available for building purposes, which they can either use themselves or let off on building leases. In addition to the advantage of thus buying land retail, at wholesale price, there is also the privilege of paying for it by easy instalments. Thousands of mechanics and labourers have, by this means become proprietors of property and possess *freehold qualifications* as *county voters*. By thus becoming holders of a stake in the county, who can estimate the amount of vice, crime, and misery prevented on the one hand; the virtue, happiness, and peace imparted on the other? There are few of the labouring population, who might not (if they would) enjoy the like privileges.

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The WALSALL FREEHOLD LAND SOCIETY was established in 1851* and has made considerable progress. So early as 1852, an estate at Palfry, near Caldmore, and consisting of about 22 acres, was duly allotted at a cost of 1*s.* $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* per yard. It was divided into 145 lots, averaging more than 620 yards each, with from 11 to 16 yards frontage, (none less than 11), to streets 12 yards wide, well macadamized and sewer'd, and having on either side a well constructed foot-path. This fact alone is sufficient to attest the soundness of the principle on which the society is based, and the advantages it affords. Here is freehold land put into the hands of the members at a fraction over a shilling per yard, which (to say the least) could not have been bought retail under 1*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.*; indeed land has been sold in the immediate neighbourhood for 2*s.* 6*d.* per yard.

Another estate very eligible for building, and comprising nearly three acres, has also been secured by the society this year. It is situate in Caldmore-lane, near the Windmill, and was purchased of George Hinchcliffe, Esq., of West Bromwich, on terms highly advantageous to the society. The cost being about 1*s.* 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* per yard, while the adjoining land is selling in building lots, at from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per yard.

One of the chief features of the society is,—that interest at the rate of 5 per cent. only, is charged to borrowers upon the balance due at the end of each year. Thus, suppose a member becomes a borrower, and takes 30*l.*, and he has paid in (say) 3*l.* it is manifest that he only borrows 27*l.* For this sum he would be charged 1*l.* 7*s.* interest for the year, and presuming that the next year he had paid in 5*l.*, the 1*l.* 7*s.* interest would be taken, and the balance, 3*l.* 13*s.* entered to his credit, leaving 23*l.* 7*s.* owing by him, upon which sum the interest would be charged for the ensuing year, and so on, so that simple interest alone on the money actually owing is charged.

Parties joining this society are allowed, in time of depression in trade, illness, and other causes, to suspend their subscriptions without incurring fines, or they may withdraw from the society

* The Trustees are Charles Forster, Esq., M.P., John Day, Esq., F. B. Certon, Esq., (present Mayor) Mr. Wm. Cotterill and Mr. Matthew Overton; Secretary, Mr. Joseph Dixon.

altogether by giving 14 days' notice, and have 4 per cent. interest added to their subscriptions.

The mode of allotment is as follows :—

When an estate is purchased, the surveyor makes a plan thereof, and divides it into suitable lots. These are balloted for by the members, (at least, those who have paid into the society a sum not less than 4*l.*) each of whose names is written on a piece of paper, specifying whether drawing for one or more shares, as the case may be ; the member answering to the first name drawn out would take No. 1 lot, as shown by the plan ; the second would take No. 2 lot, and should the third name be that of a plural shareholder, (say for two shares), he would take the lots Nos. 3 and 4, and so on.

The society was enrolled under the name of the "Walsall Benefit Building Society," but its operations so far, have been exclusively directed to the purchase and distribution of "Freehold land;" it is, however, in contemplation to incorporate a Building Society, and thus secure to members the double advantages of procuring a piece of land and a house, through the agency of one society. It is also intended to extend its operations to leasehold property.

The payments are, an entrance fee of 1*s.*

Previous to allotment, 1*s. 6d.* per share per fortnight, and after allotment 3*s.*

According to this scale, it is evident that any person paying 4*s. 6d.* per week rent, can, with the same amount, have a house, value, 100*l.*, and after continuing such payments for about eleven years and a half, the property becomes his own.

At the close of 1854, the society contained 100 members, subscribing for 179 shares, 75 of which were allotted during 1855. Thirty-one new shares were taken out, twenty-three withdrawn, six forfeited, and fourteen paid up. The society therefore contained, on the 26th March last, 91 members, subscribing for 167 shares, 61 of which were allotted, and 106 unallotted. The total receipts for the year amounted to 1008*l. 9s. 3d.* This amount added to the receipts of the three preceding years makes a total of 4,987*l. 3s. 6d.* received by the society since the commencement of its operations.

The financial statement for the year ending March 26th, 1855, appeared thus:—

LIABILITIES.	ASSETS.
	£ s. d.
Due to unallotted share-holders - - - 812 9 7	Due from Allottees - 1301 14 0
Due to the Caldmore Estate - - - 552 11 8	Cash in the Bank - 122 0 0
To redeem Land Tax - - 20 0 0	
Balance in favour of the Society - - - 38 13 9	
	<hr/> £1423 15 0
	<hr/> £1423 15 0

WALSALL RATEPAYER'S PROTECTION SOCIETY.

The utility of Ratepayer's Protection Societies has been so practically developed wherever they have been established, that it requires but little discernment to discover the paramount importance of such organizations, and the necessity for their general adoption and encouragement. The first of these associations was founded in Birmingham, A. D. 1847, by Mr. Joseph Allday, (now Alderman), an enterprising and indefatigable advocate for local retrenchment and economy. The immense saving effected in the local expenditure of that borough, through the instrumentality of the society, surpassed in an incredibly short period any public effort on record; and the extraordinary result achieved, soon led to the formation of similar associations in other towns, all of which have been alike productive of great good. A glance at the objects of these societies is alone sufficient to establish their claim on public support; they are these:—to vindicate and maintain the rights of the parishioners—to ensure the return to the local governing bodies, of men of integrity, character and experience, irrespective of party or political considerations—to retrench exorbitant and useless expenditure—to keep strict watch over all parish meetings, so as to prevent the smuggling through of any oppressive measure, or injudicious appointment—to be prepared on all occasions with legal advice, so as to oppose successfully any unlawful or unjust proceeding—to secure the parish from church rates, which, being repugnant to all right-minded churchmen, obnoxious generally to dissenters, opposed to equity, and foreign to the gospel, ought to

be abolished*—to redress individual wrongs, unequal assessments, illegal levies, or unjustifiable seizures—to check the proceedings of such of the local authorities as might attempt to exceed their duties—to prevent official partiality, and promote the interests of all ratepayers, the religious liberty of the different Christian denominations, the well-being of the poor, and the peace of the town.

The *Walsall Ratepayer's Protection Society* was established in 1849, by Mr. Henry Hale, Mr. Nicholas Roper,† John Whitgrave, Esq., John Brewer, Esq., John Shannon, Esq., and a few others. The preliminary meeting was held at the Blucher Tavern, Stafford-street, and the society,—by honesty of purpose, untiring industry, praiseworthy zeal, and unity of action, meeting the prejudices of those opposed to it in a tolerant and friendly spirit,—soon grew in influence and became instrumental in effecting many useful reforms. Amongst these may be specified the introduction of the “Amendment Act of 1850,” (already alluded to in page 15), which provided for the better assessing of the poor and other local rates of the parish, &c., and secured to owners of small tenements the privilege of compounding for their rates—a boon that has proved of no small consideration.

For some time previous to 1854 the society appeared to have lapsed into a somewhat dormant state, and it was deemed advisable

* Charles Forster, Esq., M.P. for the borough, in reference to the question of “Church rates” in a recent debate on that measure before the House of Commons, said “that he believed he represented the feeling of many excellent and pious ministers of the church of England, when he stated that they were anxious that Parliament should extirpate that root of bitterness, “Church rates.” In Walsall, which he had the honour to represent, there had been no Church rates for fifteen years. Churchmen and dissenters had anticipated the measure before the House, and had joined to repudiate the evil. All the animosities and heart burnings of former years had been removed, and the experience of the last twenty years showed clearly the importance of settling the question, it was equally clear in his own mind that it could only be settled upon the principle on which the present measure was framed—the principle of total and immediate abolition. In making an appeal to the voluntary principle, he believed that he should make an appeal to which the Church of England would respond throughout the length and breadth of the land; we should call forth the dormant energies of the Church, and should place her in the proud position of depending upon no forced support, but of relying upon the affection and liberality of her members.”

Although there has been no Church rate in Walsall for so many years, yet there has never been found the slightest difficulty in raising sufficient funds by means of voluntary contributions.

† The present respected landlord of the White Horse Inn, Park Street, and a kinsman of the late Mr. Joseph Roper who kept the Blucher Tavern for upwards of 30 years, and who was a member of the Town Council for a considerable period.

by some of its members to throw a little vigour into its operations ; accordingly, in November of that year, new officers were appointed, and the society, (from the stimulus which has been given to it,) has already received a considerable accession to the number of its members. By its watchfulness, several instances of mismanagement on the part of the local governing body, have been checked, and many privileges also preserved from infringement—to wit—the advantage recently taken of the town, by the gas committee's manager, who not only took upon himself to charge his own price to the consumers, but also assumed authority in several instances totally at variance with recognised servitude.

At the last election to the Board of Guardians, ten candidates were nominated by this society, of whom four were elected ; one candidate was disqualified in consequence of an erratum in the setting forth of the name ; others were made overseers at the last moment, and it was the general (though erroneous) impression that they were not qualified to stand. There is scarcely any public matter more worthy of the special consideration of such a society than the selection of “Guardians of the Poor.” Too generally, *names* are more sought after than *men*. The paucity of attendance at the sittings of the present Board is, and has been for some time past, notorious, of this the press of the district afford lamentable evidence ; it behoves the ratepayers therefore to be most careful in whom they vest so sacred a trust, and take heed to return those only, who can esteem the confidence reposed in them, and despite all inconvenience arising from trade or other occupation, have the honesty to give their attendance, at least, more uniformly than do some of the present Guardians of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall.

WALSALL FLORAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

The first Horticultural Society in Walsall was established in 1834, by Dr. Kent, through whose exertions, coupled with the able co-operation of F. Darwall, Esq., the honorary secretary, and a few individuals interested in the science of botany, it bloomed somewhat gaily, till the close of April, 1837, when (principally owing to the Doctor and other influential members having left the town, as well as other causes), it was dissolved.

The present Society, under the presidency of F. B. Oerton, Esq., (Mayor of the borough), although in its infancy may be said, with confidence, to rank with any in the district. The committee, assisted by their worthy secretary, Mr. James Clark, have been most indefatigable in their exertions to diffuse the useful science of Horticulture and Floriculture on an extended scale, and it is gratifying to know that their efforts so far have not been unsuccessful. The interests of the "*Cottagers*," heretofore much neglected, now receive special consideration, prizes being offered for their competition without the payment of any subscription. This encouragement induces the labouring classes to increase the produce of their gardens, so as to have a surplus for the market, and by thus obtaining a reward for their extra labour, gain the comforts which naturally arise from honest industry. So long as the Society carries out this system,—benefiting the poor while catering for the rich,—it is unquestionably entitled to the cordial support of those who would advance not only a useful science but an elevating recreation; and it is to be hoped that so laudable a project will meet with the success it so justly merits.

On the occasion of the Society's exhibition, at Spring Hill, in July last, (1855)—already alluded to in these pages*—a new tent, one hundred feet long (designed by Mr. J. Clark, and made under his superintendence by Messrs. Abnett and Pepper), was for the first time erected. This useful appendage, which has been provided by a few spirited gentlemen, who entered into a subscription for the purpose, adds not only to the convenience and comfort of visitors, but also to the general effect of the various flowers and plants exhibited under its spacious shade.

Mr. Spicer, the recently appointed collector, is unremitting in his attention to the duties of his office, and from the increase of subscribers, there is every reason to hope that the Society is already based on a firm and permanent foundation,

THE BLOXWICH HORTICULTURAL AND FLORAL SOCIETY.†

is well entitled to consideration. It was established at the com-

* See page 33.

† The Patrons of this Society are:—The Right Hon. Lord Hatherton, the Rev. John Baylie, and the Rev. W. L. Rosenthal. President, T. Russell, Esq. Vice-president, E. E. Stanley, Esq. Treasurer and Honorary Secretary, Mr. Thomas Gilbert.

mencement of the present year, (1855) by a few zealous and philanthropic gentlemen, who take delight in promoting any scheme calculated to enhance the interests of the neighbourhood in which they reside, more especially anything that has reference to the improvement of their poorer brethren.

This Society was specially founded for the advantage and improvement of "*Cottagers*," and to show them how much excellent food can be obtained from a small garden, if only properly cultivated. In order to facilitate as much as possible so desirable an object, an *extra prize* for the best, second, and third best cultivated cottager's garden, is given, in addition to the regular prizes. The Society has had two exhibitions during the season,* at both of which, (particularly the last), the show of vegetables was such as to furnish ample evidence of the beneficial results, derivable from the system of encouragement adopted. From the active and influential parties connected with this Society, and the broad and liberal views on which it is established, it bids fair to rival its older and more portly neighbours.

* The first show was held in the grounds of J. E. Bealey, Esq., an active member of the committee, and one who takes the liveliest interest in the welfare of the Society; and the second at Wallington Hall, the seat of Mrs. Russell.

PART III.

VILLAGES AND HAMLETS IN THE FOREIGN—A GLANCE AT RUSHALL
—THE CASTLE—BENTLEY HALL—SKETCH OF EDWARD HYDE,
EARL OF CLarendon—CROMWELL, AND THE BATTLE OF
WORCESTER—ESCAPE OF CHARLES II. AFTER THE BATTLE.

We shall now, with the reader's permission, visit the principal villages and hamlets in the foreign of Walsall, including the ancient parish of *Rushall*, and the far-famed manor of *Bentley*, which, though not in the foreign, yet, being in the Walsall Union, and having attached to them an unusual degree of interest, are considered entitled to some notice in these pages.

BLOXWICH,

A large and populous village in the foreign of Walsall, and situate about two miles and a half N.W. of the town, appears especially worthy of attention. It comprises within its chapelry the whole township of the foreign, except *Walsall Wood* Church district, which being detached from the rest of the township, is not in the parliamentary borough. Bloxwich is celebrated for the manufacture of bridle bits, stirrups, keys, cabinet locks, plane irons, buckle tongues, iron chains, and all kinds of saddlers' ironmongery, but especially for awl blades, a branch of trade in which it surpasses any place in the kingdom.

It is stated in Domesday book, "that the king held Blockeswich (then a portion of the manor of Wednesbury, and having a wood three furlongs in length and one in breadth) and in Scelfeld, one hide of waste appertaining to the said manor.* Erdeswick confounds it with Blechesworth, which Roger de Montgomery held 20th Conqueror.† It is also confounded in the Magna Britannia, with West Bromwich.‡ Sir Simon Degge states, in his additions

* Vide Gen. Appen. Vol. I. p. 3. + Erdeswick's Survey, p. 145.

‡ Magna Brit. Vol. V. p. 13.

to Erdeswick, that "Sir Gilbert Wakeringe, of Rickmandsworth, in the county of Hertford, who kept a great flutter in this county in the beginning of King James's time, and who died 25th December, 15 James, (1618) was seized of a capital messuage, and demesne, and three other messuages, with divers lands in the two Bloxwiches, &c., and of the manors of Essington and Womborne in the county of Stafford, &c."

THE CHURCH,

(Which is a chapel of ease to the parish church of Walsall), stands in the centre of a cemetery, beautifully shaded and sheltered by surrounding elms, which give to it a degree of retirement and solemnity peculiarly adapted for useful and serious meditation.* The building is of oblong shape, with nave, two aisles, a chancel, and tower. The greater portion of the church and tower was rebuilt in 1791, and further enlarged in 1833, when were added 200 free sittings, making in all 1,400. The burial-ground has also been extended nearly an acre. The most ancient part of the tower bears the date of 1702. In 1842, a handsome fine-toned organ was erected in the west gallery. Near the entrance of the church stands a remarkable stone pillar of great antiquity, and supposed to have been at one time a stone cross. The living is a perpetual curacy, value 150*l.* per annum, exclusive of an endowment of 20*l.* yearly, arising from a sum of 400*l.* left in 1673 by William Parker. The right of presentation to the living is now vested in the vicar of Walsall, though the inhabitants formerly claimed the advowson. The present incumbent (the Rev. John Baylie, M.A.) received the nomination from the late bishop Ryder, to whom it lapsed at the last vacancy. An allotment of Queen Anne's bounty was conferred on the benefice A. D. 1811. The following inscription on a grave stone in the burial-ground is not unworthy of notice:—

"To the memory of Samuel Wilks, late of this parish, locksmith, who died the 6 November, 1764. Reader! if thou art an inhabitant of Great Bloxwich, know, that the dust beneath thy feet, (when overseer of the poor of this

* The first spot ever set apart as a sacred burial-place; namely, the field of Ephron bought by the patriarch Abraham—was planted round about with trees. "The field and the cave that was therein, and all the trees that were in the field and in the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession." Gen. xxiii, 17.

parish), was imprisoned in thy cause, because he refused to surrender thy rights, and to submit to arbitrary mandate, by which it was intended to incorporate the poor's rates of the Foreign with those of the Borough, and thereby to compel the Foreign to the payment of a greater proportion of parochial taxes than is warranted by law.—His resistance was attended with success.—The benefit is thine."

In 1828 a *National School* was erected, in which upwards of three hundred children are educated. It is a neat brick building, in the centre of which is a handsome clock, the gift of Stubbs Wightwick, Esq. At *Blakenall Heath* is also an *Infant School*, where on Sunday divine service is celebrated. On the north side of the village, at *Short Heath* is a large *Wesleyan Chapel*, built in 1832; and in *Harden Lane* is a *Roman Catholic Chapel*, erected in 1808; a school was established in connection with this chapel in 1825. The altar piece, "taking down of Christ from the Cross," is an attractive and meritorious picture. The Primitive Methodists have also chapels both here and at Birch-hills.

Bloxwich being in the parliamentary borough of Walsall, the inhabitants have the privilege of voting for a member. It would seem (as evidenced by the foregoing epitaph) that they have ever been strenuous in sustaining their parochial independence. The population is about 4,476. The road from Walsall to Stafford passes through Bloxwich, as well as branch roads to Lichfield and Wolverhampton.

Little Bloxwich, half a mile N.E.; *Blakenall Heath*, half a mile E.; *Broadstone*, one mile S.; *Goscote*, one mile E.; *Sot's-hole* and *Wallington Heath*, three quarters of a mile N. by W. of Bloxwich; also *Hayhead*, two and a half miles E., and *Shelfield** and *Walsall Wood* three and a half miles, N.E. of Walsall are all hamlets in the township. The two latter are separated by the intervention of Rushall, from the rest of the parish, and now form an ecclesiastical district attached to

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WALSALL WOOD.

This church was erected in 1837, at the cost of 1,200*l.*, which was defrayed by grants and subscriptions. The building is in the

* Shelfield (noticed in Domesday book by the name of Scelfield) was purchased by Wm. Glasscott, 22nd December, 17th Charles, from Sir William Skeffington and Richard, his son, In the indenture it is recited, "all that manor or lordship of Shelfield and Gregory Shelton's Cottage, chief rents and services, &c., for £24."

lancet Gothic style, with quadrangular tower, and is composed of blue brick with stone dressings. There are 400 sittings, 310 of which are free. The parsonage house, a handsome building in the Elizabethan style, was built at the cost of 585*l.* The living is a perpetual curacy, the value of which is only 60*l.* per annum; it has, however, an endowment fund of 500*l.*, and an annuity of 20*l.* paid by the vicar of Walsall, in whom the patronage is vested. Adjacent to the church is a Sunday and day school, which is supported by voluntary contributions.

Birch-hills, Bescot, Doveridge, Eull-brook, Park-brook, New-mills, Pleck, Whitehall, Park-hill, Woodmill, Caldmore and Wood-end are neighbouring hamlets and suburbs near Walsall.*

BESOOT,

Or as it is designated in ancient writings Berkenscot, and Bresmundscote, is the most southern of the hamlets, and is distant from the town about two miles. In Domesday book it is described as one carucate of waste land, the property of the king.†

This ancient manor appears to have been first possessed by the Hillary family. In the 4th Henry IV, it was certified that "Sir Roger Hillary, Knight, died without issue, and that he held certain lands of the king by grand serjeantry, to look after the Hay of Ashwood; amongst which, he held of the Earl of Warwick this manor of Bescote," &c. &c.‡ It is further stated that Margaret, the wife of the said Roger, entered at his death into possession of these lands; and that Sir John Saer de Rochford. Knight, son of Joan, one of the sisters of the aforesaid Roger; and Elizabeth, wife of Sir John Russell, Knight, and daughter of another sister, were the next heirs.§ It afterwards passed into the Mountfort family,

* The White Hart Inn, at Caldmore, an ancient building in the Elizabethan style, was formerly a seat of the Hillary family. And at Woodend, is situate, Gorway House, a neat villa residence, in the occupation of Peter Potter, Esq., Agent to the Earl of Bradford.

† Gen. Append., Vol. I, p. 3.—A carucate is as much land as one team could plough in the year.

‡ Ibid, Vol. I., p. 365.—Sergeantry was a tenure by which the king was to be provided with some trifling matter towards his wars. Its honorary services still remain, being specially excepted in the Act of Charles II, by which all other tenures were converted into socage. Each serjeantry had its caput serjeantia or head, which, like the honor and barony, was the capital mansion. (Oliver's Hist. Col. Ch. W'hampton, p. 38.)

§ Huntbach MS., No. 2.

for it is also certified that William Mountfort, Knight, died 31st Henry VI, leaving Sir Baldwin Mountfort seized of this manor. Edward Mountfort, Esq. deceased in 1691, appears to have been the last male heir of this ancient family; his daughter Elizabeth, widow of one Thomas Harris, having carried it in marriage to Jonas Slaney, gentleman, as attested by indenture dated 20th January, 1717. The estate is here estimated at five-hundred and seven acres. According to Shaw, (writing in 1812) the late Rev. Jonas Slaney, of Bescot Hall, (for many years an active magistrate for the county, and vicar of Rushall), being much embarrassed, the hall, manor, and estate were sold in pursuance of a decree in Chancery to Mr. Richard Wilks, for 3,200*l.*, by whom they were occupied for about six years; and in 1794 the property was purchased by Richmond Aston, Esq., (who obtained a large fortune from coal mines at Tipton, &c.), for 4,000*l.*

The ancient mansion of the Hillarys and Mountforts occupied the site called the *Moat Garden*,—a considerable space of ground encompassed by a large square moat, over which a bridge, finely shaded with trees, was built by one of the Slaney family. Mr. Aston made extensive alterations in the premises a short time previous to his decease, which were completed by his widow, according to his original plan. The iron entrance gates, which stood close to the building, were removed to their present position, and the approach, grounds, &c. much extended and improved. Dr. Plot states, “at the village of Bescot was found a sort of earth or mud, which being stirred up seemed to shine like fire.” A story is recorded of one Mr. Jones, who whilst riding with Captain Thomas Lane in the night time, casually fell into a ditch in Bescot grounds, on being extricated from which by his companion, it was observed “that their persons and horses wherever touched by the mud, emitted a faint flame like that of burnt brandy, which continued upon them for a mile’s riding.”*

At Bescot there is a *Junction Railway Station*, which intersects the *South Staffordshire* and *London and North Western Lines*, and from which the tall and finely tapered chimney of the extensive *Forge Works*, belonging to Edward Elwell, Junior, Esq., Justice

* Plot's *Staffordshire*, p. 116.

of the Peace, (a gentleman highly and deservedly respected by all classes), and the adjoining spacious sheet of water called *Elwell's Pool*, form attractive objects for observation. About three hundred hands are here employed; the machinery is propelled by water and steam power, equal to one hundred and fifty horses, in the manufacture of spades, hoes, shovels, axes, &c., for home and exportation.

RUSHALL.

This village is an ancient manor and parish, situate on the Lichfield road, about one mile N.E. of Walsall, with which township it is said to have been originally connected. It contains about one thousand-eight-hundred and fifty acres, and abounds in coal and limestone.* The inhabitants, who are principally employed in mining, husbandry, and brickmaking, numbered in 1831 only 693, and in 1851 had increased to 1,946; this increase has chiefly taken place in the district of *Ryecroft*, where fine sand used by glass manufacturers, and loam for the foundries are found in great abundance.

RUSHALL CASTLE,

The ancient manor house, (now in ruins), is little more than half a mile distant from Walsall, and forms an interesting object of attraction. During the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, and likewise in the war between Charles I and his parliament, this castle is represented as having been strongly fortified and garrisoned. The manor anciently belonged to the family of Boweles, from whom it passed to that of Grobbere, and thence to the Harpers, by one of whom the castle was erected; the arms of the founder, "La Harpeur," are over the keystone of the main entrance leading to the court yard, and comprise a lion rampant within an engrailed "bordure," upon an ornamental escutcheon. The walls (which according to Erdeswick were all "embattled castlewise," and entirely surrounded the fortress) are composed of rough limestone, and are of immense strength. The same author describes them as having been surrounded by a deep moat, not a vestige of one, however, now remains; and with the exception of

* A description of this limestone is given in page 6.

the massive entrance arch, and walls, little is left of this celebrated mansion.

In the early part of the seventeenth century, the manor came into the possession of the Leigh family, from whom it passed to the Rev. Edward Mellish, whose executors are the present proprietors. A modern building has been erected within the ruins, and called *Bushall Hall*, at present in the occupation of Mr. John Cowley.

THE CHURCH,

Which is adjacent to the ruins, is dedicated to St. Michael, and was anciently a chapel of ease to Walsall.* This sacred edifice was originally in the pointed style of architecture, but most of the ancient fabric has given place to modern innovations. It is at present (with the exception of a portion of the steeple) being completely rebuilt. Several monuments of the Leigh family are said to have been formerly preserved within these walls, one especially of Edward Leigh, a member of the "long parliament," who was confined by Cromwell, along with other members at the King's Head, in the Strand. He is described as being a man of considerable literary reputation, and was the author of "*Critica Sacra*," and other useful works.

The living is a vicarage, valued in the king's books at 4*l.* 5*s.*; it is now worth 292*l.* annually, and was endowed by John Harper, Esq., by whom the church was rebuilt, A. D. 1,444. The living is in the patronage of the Lords of the Manor. The old vicarage house has been much improved by the present incumbent, the Rev. H. Chavasse, M.A., who is also president of the Rushall Provident Society, established in 1847, for mutual relief in cases of sickness, infirmity, and death. In 1847 a Parochial Library and School was established, a suitable building for which was erected at the cost of 660*l.*

BENTLEY HALL.

This ancient manor-house, (far famed as the residence of Colonel Lane, who with his sister, concealed Charles II, after his defeat at

* See endowment of Walsall vicarage, in Part IV, under the head of "Ancient Records."

the battle of Worcester, and assisted him to effect his final escape), is a spacious and beautiful villa, enthroned on a commanding eminence, about a quarter of a mile from the high road, and, with a few farm houses, forms the entire village of Bentley, which is part of the Earl of Lichfield's estate. Bentley is in Willenhall church district, and the Union of Walsall.* It is thus described by Harwood:—"Bentley is a manor belonging to Wolverhampton. From the family of Bentley it descended to the Griffith's and passed from them, 8, Henry VI, to Richard Lane, in which family it remained till John Lane sold it in 1748 to Joseph Turton, of Wolverhampton; from him it passed to the first Lord Anson.† During the parliamentarian war it was the residence of Col. John Lane, who gave refuge to the King Charles II, after the battle of Worcester, in 1651; and it was from hence that Jane Lane, the memorable daughter of Thomas Lane, Esq., of Bentley, conducted the king on horseback beyond Bristol, in which dangerous service she carried herself with great address and fortitude."‡

The township comprises about 1,470 acres, and in 1851 contained 381 inhabitants.

The ensuing sketch of the king's miraculous and romantic escape has been taken from an account left by Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, who affirms that the particulars are narrated as he heard them from the king himself; a fact which not only ensures authenticity, but gives to the narrative a more than ordinary interest. The style in which it is written is of a rather tedious and complicated character, so much so, as to require a great effort

* Bentley Hall is the residence of the Rev. G. H. Fisher, M.A.. Incumbent of St. Giles's, Willenhall. The ancient mansion (more is the pity) has been nearly all re-built, so that but little now remains of those hospitable walls which once welcomed and preserved the royal fugitive.

+ George, the first Lord Anson, was born at Oakedge Hall, Shugborough, near Rugeley, in 1697. He was a distinguished admiral and circumnavigator, one of the greatest glories of the British fleet in his day. He was raised to the Peerage in 1747 by the title of Lord Anson, Baron Soberton of Hampshire. After a long and useful life in the service of his country, he retired to his seat at Moor Park, Herts, where he suddenly expired in 1772. At his demise the title became extinct, but his property was inherited by his elder brother, Thomas Anson, Esq., of Shugborough, who was succeeded by his nephew, George Adams, Esq. He assumed the name of Anson, and his son and successor, Thomas Anson, Esq., was created, in 1806, Viscount Anson of Shugborough and Orgreave, in Staffordshire, and Baron Anson of Soberton, in Hampshire. He was succeeded by his son, Thomas Wm. Anson, the present Earl of Lichfield, to which degree in the peerage he was raised in 1832.

‡ Harw. Staff. p. 303.

of attention to comprehend some portions; it has been therefore thought expedient not to adhere strictly to the original phraseology.

Previous, however, to entering upon the interesting detail, it may be well to make the reader acquainted with a brief outline of the noble author's career; and also a few incidents connected with the memorable battle, which placed the young king in so much jeopardy.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, was the son of a private gentleman of fortune, in Wiltshire. He studied at Oxford with a view to the church, but in consequence of the death of two elder brothers, was removed at the age of sixteen to London, where he pursued with diligence the study of the law. During this period he associated with some of the most eminent of his contemporaries, among whom were Lord Falkland, Carew, Waller, Selden, Morley, and Chillingworth. In the practice of the law he figured so creditably as to attract the notice of Archbishop Laud. He entered parliament in 1640, and soon afterwards left the bar to devote himself more exclusively to public affairs. He abstained for some time from connecting himself with any political party, but eventually joined the royalists.

In the struggles between Charles I. and the people, he was much consulted by the king, and many of the papers issued in the royal cause during the civil war were his productions. Charles, while holding his court at Oxford, nominated him Chancellor of the Exchequer, and conferred upon him the honour of knighthood. Leaving the king in 1644, he accompanied Prince Charles to the West, and subsequently to Jersey, where he remained for two years after the prince's departure from that island, engaged in tranquil literary occupations, and especially in writing a history of the stormy events in which he had lately been an actor. In 1651 he joined the exiled Charles in Paris, and continued to be of great service in managing the embarrassed pecuniary affairs of the court, in giving counsel to the king, and in preserving harmony among his adherents. At this time his poverty was such that he writes in 1652, "I have neither clothes nor fire to preserve me from the sharpness of the season;" and in the following year, "I have not had a *livre* of my own for three months." He appears to have

been greatly annoyed by the indolence and extravagance of Charles, who, however, valued him highly, and manifested his approbation by raising him to the dignity of Chancellor.

This appointment by a king without a kingdom, besides serving to testify the royal favour, enabled the easy and indolent monarch to rid himself of clamorous applicants for future lucrative offices in England, by referring them to one who had greater ability to resist solicitation with firmness. Of the four confidential counsellors by whose advice Charles was almost exclusively directed after the death of Oliver Cromwell, Hyde bore the greatest share of business, and was believed to possess the greatest influence. He was a witness of the Restoration, and was with Charles at Canterbury in his progress to London; followed his triumphant entry to the capital; and took his seat on the first of June (1660) as Speaker of the House of Lords; he also sat on the same day in the Court of Chancery. In the same year his daughter became the wife of the Duke of York, by which marriage, Hyde was rendered a progenitor of two queens of England, Mary, and Anne. At the coronation in 1661, the earldom of Clarendon was conferred on him, along with a gift from the king of 20,000*l.* He enjoyed the office of Chancellor till 1665, when, having incurred the popular odium by some of his measures, and raised up many bitter enemies in the court by his opposition to the dissoluteness and extravagance which there prevailed, he resigned the great seal by his Majesty's command, and was soon afterwards compelled to withdraw from the kingdom. He retired to France, and occupied himself in completing his "History of the Rebellion," (for such was the epithet bestowed by the royalists upon the civil war), which, however,—not being intended for publication till the numerous individuals of whom it treated were no more—did not make its appearance till the reign of Queen Anne (1707).*

Soon after the death of Charles I., Cromwell was appointed to command the army in Ireland against the royalists commanded by the Duke of Ormond, and a body of the "native Irish," under O'Neal. After scouring the whole country, gaining conquest upon conquest, which, (in unison with the general tenor of his actions)

* Cyclopaedia of English Literature, Vol. I, p. 476.

were not untainted with brutal ferocity—Cromwell returned to England, in high favour, and received the thanks of Parliament. The Scots had by this time placed young Charles on the Scottish throne, and it became necessary to adopt measures for prosecuting the war in that quarter. Fairfax would not on principle oppose the presbyterians, and refused the command, which, as a matter of course, devolved upon Cromwell, who boldly set out at the head of 16,000 men. The Scots prepared to meet the invasion, and a battle ensued at Dunbar, in which they were put to flight and hotly pursued with fearful slaughter. It is said that Cromwell did not on that occasion lose above 40 men. Nothing daunted at this defeat, the brave young Charles resolved to march immediately into England, expecting to be there joined by all the royalists. The Scots approved not of so hazardous an enterprise, and fell from him in large numbers, and the English so dreaded the name of his formidable opponent, that they also refused to unite with him. On his arrival at Worcester, Charles heard to his mortification that Cromwell, at the head of an increased army, amounting to 40,000, was marching from Scotland with rapid strides. The news had scarcely arrived when Cromwell made his appearance (Sep. 3, 1651) and surrounding the town on every side, dealt death and destruction amongst the disordered royalists. The streets were strewn with dead and dying; nearly the whole of the Scottish army was either killed or captured, and the king himself, after the exercise of much valour, was compelled to fly.

ESCAPE OF CHARLES, AFTER THE BATTLE.

Though the king could not obtain an army to fight, yet were too many to be found anxious to fly with him; he had not gone many hours' journey from Worcester, when he had about him, near, if not above 4,000 of his horse; but there was a paleness in every man's looks, and jealousy and confusion in their faces, and he resolved to withdraw himself. This he found means to do under cover of night, accompanied by a couple of his most trusty servants, whom however, he with due precaution discharged at day break, having first made them cut off his hair; he then betook himself to an adjacent wood, relying for preservation upon Him, who alone could and did miraculously deliver him.

Overcome with fatigue, he lay down to rest, when he espied a man hiding in an oak close by, who, on recognising the king, immediately descended ; he proved to be a gentleman of the neighbouring county of Staffordshire, named Careless, who had served his late Majesty during the war, and was one of the few friends who rallied round Charles at Worcester. After some consultation as to the safest mode to elude detection during the day. Careless succeeded in advising the king to take shelter with him in the tree that he had just left, the boughs of which, were so thick with leaves as to completely screen them from view.* They here remained secure all day, and not only observed those who came in search of them, but actually overheard the various remarks of their pursuers “ how they would serve the king if they could only catch him,” &c.

When night came, it was not in the king’s power to forget that he had lived two days and two nights with scarcely any food or sleep, and he thought it was high time to make some provision for both, so resolved (with the advice of his companion) to leave his blessed tree ; Careless being a Roman Catholic was well acquainted with those of that persuasion, of all degrees, who had the best opportunities of affording safe shelter ; his family it is said rendered considerable service to the unfortunate king during his concealment in the neighbourhood, so that it was part of the king’s good fortune to have met with that gentleman. They proceeded together through the wood, keeping amongst the enclosures, farthest from any highway, and after having walked at least eight or nine miles, making many a shift to get over hedge and ditch, which the king felt the more grievous from the weight of his boots—arrived at a poor cottage, the owner of which, being a Roman Catholic, was known to Careless. They called up the host, who readily understood the condition of the travellers, and presently conducted them to a little barn, full of hay, which was even a better lodging than the poor man himself possessed. After conferring together as to the news and temper of the country, it was considered unwise for both to remain. Careless, therefore, agreed to go, and within two days send an honest man to guide the king to some other place of

* This celebrated tree is still preserved with great care. The wood in which it is situated is at a place called Boscobel, about seven miles from Wolverhampton, and close to Chillington, the seat of Thomas W. Gifford, Esq.

security; and in the meanwhile it was arranged that his Majesty should stay upon the hay-mow, the poor man of the house, knowing no more, than that he was a friend of the captain's, and one of those who had escaped from Worcester. Careless departed before dawn, and the king, thus left alone, fell into a sound sleep, which he enjoyed till his host brought him the only refreshment he could offer, viz., a piece of bread and a great pot of buttermilk, which his Majesty thought the best food he had ever eaten. The poor man spoke very intelligently of the country and of the people, who were either well or ill affected to the king, and of the great fear that possessed the hearts of those who were best affected. He said "that he lived by his daily labour, and that the humble fare which he had brought him was such as he and his wife used, for, he feared, that by endeavouring to procure better, it might draw suspicion upon him, and lead parties to suppose that he had some body with him, that was not of his own family; but should he wish him to procure some meat, he would do so." The king was quite satisfied with his reason, and would not run the hazard for a change of diet; but desired that the man would favour him with his company as often as he conveniently could.

His Majesty had rested upon this hay-mow, and fed upon this diet for two days and nights, and on the third evening, a man a little above the condition of his host, came from Careless, to conduct him to another house, about twelve miles distant, and more out of the way of any road through which it was likely for any part of the army to march. Having changed clothes with his landlord, even to his shirt, (for he wisely considered that fine linen in so humble a garb might lead to his discovery), he set out in the beginning of the night, under the conduct of his guide, who led him the nearest way, crossing over hedges and ditches, in order to avoid being met by any one in their progress.

So fatigued was the king during this journey, that he was even ready to despair, and prefer being taken prisoner, before purchasing his safety at such a price. He had not proceeded far, when his shoes (with which he had been provided in lieu of his accustomed boots) hurt him so badly, that he was compelled to discard them, and walk with no other protection than his hose, which were

quickly worn out; and so sorely wounded were his feet with thorns and stones, that he many times cast himself upon the ground in desperation, obstinately refusing to proceed. His sturdy guide, however, encouraged him onwards, sometimes promising that the way should be better, and sometimes assuring him that he had but little farther to go; and in this distress and perplexity, they arrived before dawn at their destination. The dwelling that was now to afford him shelter, seemed of a somewhat better class than that which he had left, but his lodging was still confined to a barn; here he had served to him some meat and porridge, and, with the addition of butter and cheese, he thought himself well feasted. He was also supplied with shoes and better hose, and after his feet were sufficiently recovered, was conducted by his faithful guide to another poor cot, within a convenient distance. Being now in that quarter which was more inhabited by Roman Catholics than most other parts of England, he was led from one to another of that persuasion, and concealed for several days with great fidelity. A benedictine monk, named Hudleston, was at this time sent to him by Careless, and afforded him much comfort and assistance. He provided him with more proper habit than the rags he then wore, and when the places to which he conducted him were at too great a distance to walk, he found him a horse. The king having discovered from the monk, ‘that Lord Wilmot lay concealed in a friend’s house, not a great distance off, begged of him to contrive some means by which they could speak together, and within a night or two the desired interview was accomplished. Lord Wilmot described to the king how that he had by very good fortune fallen into the house of an honest gentleman, one Mr. Lane, a person of an excellent reputation for his fidelity to the king, and otherwise bore a universally good name; that his son, who had been a colonel in the king’s service during the late war, was on his way with men to Worcester the very day of the defeat, and that men of all opinions paid the old man very great respect; that he had been most civilly treated there; and that the old gentleman had used some diligence to find out where the king was, so that he might get him to his house, where he was sure he could conceal him till a full deliverance might be effected.’ The monk also spoke

of Mr. Lane's reputation in the highest terms, how 'that he had a fair estate, and was exceedingly beloved; that he was the oldest Justice of the Peace in that county of Stafford, and though a zealous Protestant, yet he lived with so much civility and candour towards the Catholics, that they would all trust him as they would one of their own profession; and that he could not think of any place so likely to afford good repose and security.' The king liked the proposition, and not thinking it fit to surprise the gentleman, sent forward Wilmot to assure himself that he would be received. The monk then conducted the king to a house at a reasonable distance, where, according to appointment, Lord Wilmot returned with every assurance of welcome, and they at once proceeded together to Mr. Lane's house; Wilmot returning under care of the monk, to be in readiness when any further movement should be thought necessary. The king remained here in quiet and blessed security for many days, receiving all possible attention, and every information respecting the state of the country, &c. When, however, he saw the proclamation, in which a thousand pounds was offered to any man 'who would discover and deliver up the person of CHARLES STEWART, and declaring the penalty of high treason against those who presumed to harbour or conceal him, he thought it was full time to consider how he could get near to the sea coast, from whence some means might be found to convey him out of England. Upon this matter he communicated with those of the family who took so warm an interest in his behalf; namely, the old gentleman, (the father) a very grave and venerable person; the colonel, (his eldest son, a man very plain in his discourse and behaviour, but of fearless courage, and integrity superior to any temptation); and a daughter of the house,* of very good wit and discretion, and very fit to bear any part in such a trust.

Mr. Lane had a niece, or very near kinswoman, who was married to a gentleman named Norton,† who resided within a few miles of

* The Colonel's sister Jane.

† According to a little work published in the year of the Restoration, under the name of Boscombe, Mrs. Norton was sister to Mrs. Lane. The circumstance is thus noticed:— "Col. Lane, having secured my Lord's (Wilmot's) horses, and being come to Moseley according to appointment of Friday night, was brought up to my Lord by Mr. Whitgreave;

Bristol, which was at least four or five days journey from Bentley Hall, but a place most to be desired, as the king was not only well acquainted with that part of the country, but many persons, to whom in an extraordinary case he durst make himself known. It was therefore resolved that Mrs. Lane should visit this cousin, who was known to be of good affections, and that she should ride behind the king, who was fitted with clothes and boots for such service; and that a servant of his father's, in livery, should wait upon her. A good house was easily pitched upon for the first night's lodging, where Wilmot received notice to meet them. Accordingly the king set out on his journey,* the Colonel bearing him company at a distance, with a hawk upon his fist, and two or three spaniels, which warranted him to ride out of the way, while keeping his charge still in his eye. In this manner they arrived in safety at their first night's post. Here Lord Wilmot found them, and their journeys being adjusted, he was instructed where to meet them each night. The Colonel continued his hawking until he had accompanied them to within less than a day's journey of Mr. Norton's; he then gave his hawk to Lord Wilmot, who followed on the same practice.

Whenever the party put up at any house, the king was immediately carried into some quiet chamber, Mrs. Lane declaring 'that he was a neighbour's son, whom his father had lent her to ride before her, in the hope that he would the sooner recover from a quartan ague, with which he had been for some time miserably afflicted.' By this artifice she invariably caused a good bed to be provided for him, as well as the best food, which she generally contrived to carry to him herself. In order to get to Mr. Norton's, it was necessary to ride quite through the city of Bristol; a place with which the king was so well acquainted, that he could not

and, after mutual salutation, acquainted him that his sister, Mrs. Jane Lane, had, by accident, procured a pass from some commander of the rebels, for herself and a man to go to Bristol to see her sister, then near her time of lying in; and freely offered, if his Lordship thought fit, he might make use of it, which my Lord seemed inclined to accept; and on Saturday night was conducted by Col. Lane's man (himself not being well) to the Colonel's house, at Bentley. His Lordship then, and not before, discovered his name to Mr. Whitgreave, and gave him many thanks for so great a kindness in so imminent a danger."

* This took place towards the end of October, 1651.

avoid pausing to view the alterations which had taken place since he was last there, and when he approached the spot where the great fort had stood, he could not forbear turning his horse out of the way, to ride round it with his fair companion.

When they arrived at Mr. Norton's house, it was a holiday, and many people were congregated about a bowling-green in front, watching the bowlers. The king recognised in the group many familiar faces, amongst them one of his own chaplains, who was allied to Mr. Norton. William, (by which name the king went) quietly walked with his horse to the stable, where he remained until his kind mistress had provided for his retreat. Mrs. Lane was most welcomely received by her cousin, to whom, as soon as she was conducted to her chamber, she lamented the condition of 'a good youth who accompanied her thither, and who was very delicate, having only just recovered of an ague ;' and requested of her cousin 'that a chamber might be provided for him, and a good fire, as he would retire early to rest, and was not fit to remain down stairs.' A pretty little chamber was accordingly prepared, in which "William" was soon comfortably ensconced, greatly relieved at having been freed from the company below. Though the mistress of the house and Mrs. Lane had been reared together, and were attached friends, as well as kindred, yet, this had been her first visit, and as an excuse for making so long a journey at such a time of the year, she stated that 'she was on her way to a friend in Dorsetshire, whither she would proceed after a little rest.' Some broth having been brought to the table at supper, Mrs. Lane filled a little dish, and desired the butler 'to carry it to "William," and say that he should have some meat sent to him presently.' The butler did as desired, and spoke kindly to the young man, who seemed willing to eat. At length, looking narrowly upon him, the butler fell upon his knees, and with tears in his eyes, exclaimed 'how glad he was to see his Majesty.' The king was infinitely surprised, yet recollect ed himself sufficiently to laugh at the man, and ask him 'what he meant ?' The butler had been falconer to Sir Thomas Jermyn, and made it appear that he knew well to whom he spoke, repeating some particulars which the king had not forgot. Whereupon the king conjured him 'not to speak of what he knew,

even to his master, though he believed him to be a very honest man.' The fellow promised, and kept his word, and the king was all the better waited upon during the time of his abode. Dr Gorges (the king's chaplain before alluded to) being present at supper, asked Miss Lane many questions concerning William, of whom he saw she was so careful, 'how long his ague had left him,' and the like; to which she returned such answers as best occurred to her. The doctor (like many others at this time) had retired from the clerical profession, and turned his attention to the study of physic; and when supper was over, out of good nature, and without telling any body, he left to visit "William." The king on perceiving him coming, withdrew to the side of the bed, where he might be farthest from the candle. The doctor, taking his seat beside him, felt his pulse, and asked him many questions, which he answered in as few words as possible, expressing great inclination to go to bed. The doctor, having remained with him a short time, went to Mrs. Lane, and told her 'that he had been with "William," who would do well;' and at the same time advised her what to do, should his ague return. The next morning the doctor went away, so that the king saw him no more.

After some days stay here, and communication between the king and Lord Wilmot, it was agreed that the latter should wait upon Colonel Francis Windham, who lived about a day's journey off, and appoint a place where the king could speak with him. This gentleman behaved himself well during the war, and had been governor of Dunstar Castle, where the king had lodged when he was in the west; besides which, his Majesty entertained a special regard for his eldest brother, whose wife had been his nurse. A convenient time and place of meeting was soon fixed, and the king, having taken his leave of Mrs. Lane, who remained with her cousin Norton, proceeded in company with Lord Wilmot to the spot appointed. On their way, they met a former servant of the king's, who well knew Lord Wilmot; they however succeeded in passing unobserved. At the place of meeting they remained only one night. The king then went to the Colonel's house, where he rested many days, while the Colonel endeavoured to discover some safe means of embarkation, To find a vessel, outward-bound, that

would take a passenger, was no easy matter; and there was great danger of getting one that could be trusted. The Colonel thought of a gentleman of his acquaintance, named Ellison, who resided near Lyme, in Dorsetshire; he had been a captain in the king's army, and was still looked upon as a very honest man. With him the Colonel consulted as to how a vessel might be obtained, to take a couple of gentlemen, (friends of his, who were in danger of being arrested), to France. Lyme was considered as malicious and disaffected a town, to the king's interest, as any in England, but there was in it a master of a bark, of whose honesty Captain Ellison was quite confident; he had only returned from France, and was waiting for lading to make another voyage. The captain having questioned him on the subject, he ultimately agreed to undertake the affair for fifty pounds, observing that 'the greatest caution and secrecy should be preserved, as his putting to sea again so soon without a freight, would be very likely to create a suspicion.' Colonel Windham being apprized of this arrangement, accompanied Lord Wilmot to Captain Ellison's residence, from whence they all rode to a house near Lyme, where they were met by the master of the bark, ; and it was resolved, that on a certain night, he should draw out his vessel from the pier, and make for a point about a mile from the town, where his ship could remain upon the beach when the tide was out, the return of which would take her off about break of day. Near this point was a small inn, kept by a man who was reputed honest, and to which the cavaliers of the country often resorted. Here, the two gentlemen were to come in the early part of the night, so that they might put themselves on board. All things being thus concerted, and good earnest given to the master, Lord Wilmot and the Colonel returned to the king, the captain undertaking to look carefully after the master; and if anything should turn out contrary to expectation, to give notice at a certain place where it was intended the king should be the day before he was to embark.

The appointed day arrived, and all preparations having been pronounced ready, 'the captain conducted the king and Lord Wilmot to within sight of the inn, and then returned to his own house about a mile distant, the Colonel remaining still where they had lodged, until he might hear of their safe departure.

The inn was filled with travellers, so that the fugitives had to content themselves with an ordinary chamber. At dawn, Wilmot went out in order to discover the bark, but to his consternation no vessel was to be seen. The sun arose, and still nothing like a ship in view. They sent to the captain, who was equally amazed, and immediately despatched a messenger to the town, who returned with word that the bark was still in the harbour, but that the master could not be found. Both Wilmot and the king suspected the captain, and the captain suspected the master. It was now after ten o'clock, so concluding that it was not prudent to stay longer at their present quarters, they mounted their horses, and returned to where they had left the Colonel.

It was subsequently discovered that the master of the vessel had meant honestly, and made all things ready for the voyage; but that when he proceeded to pack up some changes of linen and other articles, such as he was accustomed to take with him to sea, his wife (who had observed that he had been for some days fuller of thought than usual, and had seen the seamen who generally accompanied him convey provisions on board the bark), now felt convinced that her husband meant putting to sea; she well knew that there was yet no lading in the vessel, and suspecting that he was engaged in some secret mission which boded no good, secured the door, swearing that he should not leave the house that night, and threatening that if he persisted in going, she would arouse the neighbours, and have him carried before the Mayor to be examined. The poor man thus mastered by the passion and violence of his wife, and fearing that any resistance on his part might get him into trouble, was forced to yield, and so returned to his bed.

It was most fortunate that the king had so hastened from the inn. The day was a solemn fast, which was then observed, principally to inflame the people against his Majesty and all those who were loyal to him; and there was a chapel in the village, where a weaver, who had been a soldier, was accustomed of late to preach most vehemently against the old order of government. At the very time when Charles left, the weaver was denouncing him to his congregation, impressing upon them 'that Charles Stuart was lurking somewhere in the country, and that they would merit from God Almighty if they could find him out.' What was still more

remarkable, the other travellers who had lodged in the inn that night, had sent for a smith to examine their horses, it being a hard frost. The smith, when he had done, naturally enough, also examined the feet of the two horses belonging to the royal party ; when he had observed, them he told the host ‘that one of those horses had travelled far, and he was sure that his four shoes had been made in four different counties.’ The smith going to the sermon, communicated this intelligence to some of the neighbours, and so it eventually came to the ears of the preacher, who immediately sent for an officer and searched the inn. On finding that both horses and guests had gone, he caused them to be pursued in various directions, positively declaring ‘that one of the travellers was no other than Charles Stuart.’

When the king and Lord Wilmot made known their disappointment to the Colonel, the conclusion was at once arrived at, that it was no longer safe to remain in those parts, and without any further delay they rode back to the Colonel’s house, where they arrived at night. It was then resolved that the next attempt should be made in Hampshire and Sussex. Colonel Windham bad no interest in that quarter, and as they must needs pass through all Wiltshire before they could get thither, (which would require many days journey) it was evident that the undertaking would be attended with much danger, especially for the king to ride through any great town, as Salisbury or Winchester.

Between the Colonel’s and Salisbury resided one Colonel Robert Philips, a younger brother of a very loyal family. He had served the king during the war, and his Majesty resolved on trusting him, and so sent forward Lord Wilmot to arrange an appointment. Philips accordingly proceeded to the Colonel’s house, for being a kinsman, he could do so without suspicion. The roads were now full of soldiers who were making for their respective quarters. Many regiments of both horse and foot were assigned for the west, of which division Desborough was commander-in-chief. These marches were likely to continue for several days, and it was deemed unsafe for the king to stay so long in his present abode ; he, therefore, resorted to his old security of taking a female behind him, and in that manner, with a kinswoman of Colonel Windham, arrived

in safety at a place not far from Salisbury, under the guidance of Colonel Philips. In this journey they passed through the middle of a regiment of horse, and presently after, met Desborough himself in company with three or four men.

The next day after their arrival, Dr. Hinchman, one of the prebends of Salisbury met on the plains (by appointment), the king, Lord Wilmot, and Philips ; the two latter then left for the sea coast to find a vessel, and the Dr. conducted the king to a place called Heale, three miles from Salisbury, and belonging to Sergeant Hyde, who was afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench ; the house, (which was then in the possession of the widow of his elder brother) stood alone, some distance from neighbours, or any highway. Here they arrived late in the evening, and supped with some gentlemen, who were accidentally there, and could not well be avoided. The king rose early the next morning and left, as if he had continued his journey, the widow, however, (being trusted with the knowledge of her guest), sent her servants out of the way, and at an appointed hour received him again. He was then accommodated in a little room, which had been made since the commencement of the trouble, for the concealment of delinquents.

Here he lay concealed for many days, the widow herself attending him, with such things as were necessary, and bringing him such letters as the Dr. received from Lord Wilmot and Colonel Philips. At length a vessel having been provided, upon the coast of Sussex, and due notice forwarded to Dr. Hinchman, he arranged for the king to meet him at Stonehenge, upon the plains, three miles from Heale, whither the widow, took care to direct him. The Dr. then attended him to a place, where he was received by Colonel Philips, who the next day delivered him to Lord Wilmot, with whom he went to a house in Sussex, recommended by Colonel Gunter, a gentleman who had served the king in the war, and who had now ready for him a little bark at Brighthelmstone, a small fishing town where he went early on board, and soon landed in safety at Fécamp, in Normandy.

It is recorded that no less than forty persons, men and women, had at different times been privy to the king's escape.

The annexed records show that his Majesty after the restoration,

was not unmindful of the services rendered him by the family of Lane. Several high honours and emoluments were conferred upon them, among others was offered the privilege of interment in the royal cemetery, at Westminster; this, however, the Colonel modestly declined, and was buried in Wolverhampton Church.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, 19th DECEMBER, 1060.

Resolved.—“That as a mark of respect to Mrs. Lane, and in testimony of the high value of her services, in being instrumental to the preservation and security of the person of his royal Majesty, there be conferred on the said Mrs. Lane the sum of 1,000*l.*, to buy her a jewel; and that the same be, and hereby stands charged on the arrears of the grand excise, and paid to her, or her assigns, in course, after the other sums are satisfied which are charged on the grand excise, by former orders of this Parliament. And the commissioners of excise, for the time being, are hereby empowered and required to satisfy and pay the same accordingly. And this order, together with the acquaintance of the said Mrs. Lane, or her assigns, testifying the receipt thereof, shall be to the commissioners of excise a sufficient warrant and discharge.”

CHARLES R.—To our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Henry, Earl of Peterborrow, deputy to our right trusty and to right well-beloved cousin, Henry, Earl of Norwich, Earl Marshall of England, greeting:—We, calling to mind the great and signal service performed to us by John Lane, of Bentley, in the county of Stafford, deceased, in his ready concurring to the preservation of our royal person after the battle of Worcester; at which time contemning the threatenings published by the murtherers of our royal father, against any one who should conceal or assist us, and disdaining the rewards proposed to such as should be instrumental in the discovery and destruction of our person; and not valuing any hazard his family might run; with the duty of an unspotted allegiance, did by his great prudence and fidelity so conduct us, that we were able at length to retire to places of safety beyond the seas; have therefore, of our free will, and proper motion, given and granted unto the descendants lawfully issued from the body of the said John Lane, this honourable remuneration, as a notable mark or badge of his constant fidelity; that is to say, henceforth, they shall bear in augmentation to their paternal arms, *three lyons passant guardant, or in a Canton Gu.* And our will and pleasure is, that you do require and command our servants, the kings and officers of arms, to marshal and set up in all proper places and upon all occasions, the paternal arms of the said John Lane, with the augmentation aforesaid. And that you also direct and require the register of our college of arms to cause this our concession to be duly entered upon record in our said college. Given under our royal signet

* Oliver's Hist. Col. Church, W'hpton. Append. L. 189.

and sign manual, this 12th day of July, Anno 1677, and in the 29th year of our reign."

By his Majesty's command,

J. WILLIAMSON.

The following minute, bearing date 20 Julii, 1689, also appears in the Journals of the House of Commons:—

"A petition of the Lady Jane Lane, now Fisher, and of Thomas Lane, Esq. was read, setting forth that his late Majesty King Charles II, for the services done by them and their families to the crown, was pleased to grant to the petitioner, the lady, a pension of 1,000*l.* per annum for life; and to the petitioner, Thomas, a pension of 500*l.* per annum for life also; and praying, that in the bill which is now passing, concerning their Majesty's revenue, the said yearly payment may be preserved to them.

Ordered, that the said petition be referred to the consideration of the committee of the whole house, to whom the bill for settling the revenue is referred."

PART IV.

ANCIENT RECORDS, &c.*

EXEMPTION OF THE BURGESSES FROM TOLLS—ANCIENT CODE OF LAWS—DECREE OF JOHN ARUNDEL, BISHOP OF LICHFIELD, TO THE “MAIOR AND HIS BREDREN,” A.D. 1496—THE ROYAL PARK—BAYARD AND HIS COLTS—QUEEN ELIZABETH’S GRANT, AND VISIT TO WALSALL—SIR W. DUGDALE, THE HISTORIAN, AND THOMAS WOLLASTON, ESQ.—EXPENSES INCURRED IN FROUROUNG THE FIRST CHARTER, &c., &c., &c.

By a strange, but still subsisting rule of law, the time of legal memory is declared to commence, or be coeval with the reign of Richard I. A.D. 1189, and any custom or prescription which can be proved to have originated since that remote period, is considered to be within the “time of memory;” and on the other hand, whatever has existed prior to that reign, is by intendment of law, immemorial. Many of the ancient customs and privileges which Walsall enjoys, can be proved to have been granted by different kings, previous to that date; some are now either obsolete, or valueless; though, when bestowed, they were of considerable importance.

The iron chest, at the Town-hall, contains many curious and ancient charters of this description. One which is dated the 1st Henry I. (1100), is a grant to the “men of Walsall” of exemption

* Much of the valuable information in this division is from a very rare collection of antique documents, published some years back, and for which, as well as many ancient and interesting manuscripts, the Author is indebted to W. H. Duignan, Esq.

Note 2, on page 26, and Note 1, on page 28, respecting the “grinding of corn at the Lord’s Mills,” refer to this division of the work—“Ancient Records”—the term Appendix there used, being an erratum.

from payment of toll throughout England. That charter, after stating that by a custom long approved, the "men of antient demesne," were exempt from such payment, declares that Walsall being "*de antiquo dominico corona Angliae*," (of ancient demesue of the crown of England), the men of that manor should be free therefrom. The city of Coventry claims a like exemption, granted in the time of Edward the Confessor, by Leofrick, Earl of Mercia, husband of the famous Lady Godiva; and it is more than probable that Walsall enjoyed the franchise at a much earlier period than the reign of Henry I. who gave the charter above referred to, as that instrument is rather a confirmation and acknowledgment of previous rights than an original grant.

In former days, when the chief business of the kingdom was transacted at periodical fairs and markets, and when all the merchandise as well as cattle brought thither for sale, were subject to a tax by the owners or grantees, of such fairs or markets, the exemption therefrom, and also from toll at ferries, bridges, &c., (centuries before turnpike acts were introduced) was no inconsiderable advantage to the persons so privileged. Within the present century, dealers in cattle who resided in the town, have been known to apply to the town clerk for certificates of their being burgesses of Walsall, which certificates duly countersigned by the Mayor, protected the owners from "*Theolonium*" "*Tolonium*," or toll in all fairs and markets which they might attend.

A story is told of a gentleman, (a native of Walsall), who when stopped some years ago by the gate-keeper of a bridge near *Eton* or *Windsor*, replied, with assured importance, that "he was exempt from toll, being a free burgess of the borough of Walsall;" upon which, the man with a respectful bow, immediately allowed him to pass toll free.*

From the annexed code of laws, "for the gode rule and governaunce of the towne of Walsall," made in the reign of Henry VI. (1440), it would appear that the "Maior and his bredren" or the "XXIIII" (as they were pleased to style themselves), not only assumed great authority, but were "wide awake" to the privileges

* Originally this privilege was exclusively confined to the capital burgesses, it however in time became subject to abuse, and is now obsolete.

of their (in those days) purely aristocratic order; one fact at least is evident, they were not proof against the natural tendency of mankind to exempt *themselves* from penalties which they are so ready to impose on *others*.

CODE OF LAWS.

I.—First, we ordeyne and stablysshe all thies articles hereafter folowing, that is to say, after eny chosyng of eny Masters of the Gylde, that these articles shalbe rehersed in the counsell chamber before them which be so chosen for the tyme beyng to the entent that they shall not fayle to kepe and folowe the goode rule and governaunce which be couteyned in the seyd ordynance, for the welth and profyt of the seyd Gylde and in eschuying of such grete mysorder and inconvenyence as here of late hathe fortuned and happenyd. And also in lykewise at eny Mychelmas Courte when the Mayer, Bayly, Constable, and Sergeant be chosen, alle the articles which concern the good rule and governaunce of the Borouge, to be rehersed by the olde Mayer and his brethern, before and to the newe Mayer, Bayley, Constable and Sergeant, for the good contynuence of gode rule and governaunce of the Borouge, to be had and used all the yere after.

II.—Also it is ordeyned and stablyshed, that the Mayer, Masters of the Gylde, Constable and Sergeante shalbe openly sworne upon a prymar or the holy Evangelist, to obserue, fulfil, and kepe these articles folowing; and in as moche as in them lyethe, to cause alle oþyr of the Borouge to kepe and obserue the same articles.

III.—Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer and the Officers above named, and also that the Mayer and Mayers, and Officers, that hereaft. shalbe, shall cause a comen semble to be had, and shall call before them alle the Burgesses of the Towne and Borouge then and there, evy Burgess to be sworne to obey the Mayer and Officers for the tyme beyng, and that hereafter shalbe, and for his parte, kepe the Statute of the same Towne and Borouge; and also shall geve his assistaunce to cause other to do in lyke man^r of wise, and in alle man^r causes concernyng the kinge's pease, honeste welth and profyt of the Churche and Borouge, shall geve good and indifferent counsell, and shalbe no part taker in eny cause agenst

the welth of the same Towne, but wele and truly, egally and indifferently to do, morow^r hym-selff to be redy at alle tymes to his power, to assiste the Mayer, and alle other officers of the same Towne for the tyme beyng, for the meynteynance and prvacion (preservation) of good rule, welth, and profyt of the same Towne and Churche.

IV. Also it is ordeyned, that if eny of the sd Burgesses refuse the ordeynance of the articles next above written, that then he or they so refusyng to forseyt to the Burgesses-Box,* for his obstynacy, vis. viii*d.* and if hee do offend eft-sons, (again) then unmediatly to be discharged of his or theyer Burgessey or Burgessship and office if he beré eny. And eny Burgess so offendyng shal forfyt to the Burges-Box for his obstynacy, vis. viii*d.* to be leuyed (levied) by the Bayly of the Boroigne and hee to have thereof for his offycedoyng (doing) iii*i d.* (4*d.*) and the same persone nevr aft. to be Burges; but if he geve at his entre next to the Burges-Box x*s.* and then to be sworne in man^r and forme as is above-said.

V. Also it is ordeyned and stablyshed, that if eny of the nomber of the XXIIII brethern, that nowe be, or eny other that hereaft shalbe chosen to be of the company of the XXIIII of the sayd Towne of Walsall, that upon suffycyent warnyng do not appere when they or any of them be requyred by the Mayer or Mayers for the tyme beyng, at eny day or hower assygned for the common welthe of the Towne, and also com not to the Gylde Halle by the thyrde knollyng of the common bell, with oute a resonable excuse; pved (provided) that then any one so offendyng to lose xi*d.* for evr tyme, as oft as theye be founden defectyf, and it to be leuyed by the Bayly, of the Boroigne, at the comandement of the Mayer or Mayers for the tyme beyng and that to be put in to the Burges-Box, and the Bayly to have iii*i d.* for doyng his office.

VI. Also it is ordeyned, that if eny of the XXIIII that nowe be or hereaft shalbe, utter, shewe or disclose eny councel moved, had or spoken prively amongst them, for the comon welthe of the sayde Towne, if sufficient profe thereupon be had, he to forfeit to

* Some years ago, in removing a portion of wainscoting in the Town-hall, an antique box of curious workmanship, and cut out of a solid piece of wood, was discovered. It was doubtless, the "Burgesse's-Box" so frequently mentioned in this Code.

the Burges-Box iii*s.* iii*d.* and that to be leuyed by the Bayly, and he to haue iii*d.* for the leuyng of the same. And he that so offendithe to be put oute of the fellishipp of the XXIIII, and Counsel of the Towne, and nev^r aft. to be called as one of theym, but upon a newe fyne to be sessted by the Mayer and brethern.

VII. ALSO it is ordeyned, that if eny variaunce, debate, or disconde, be had by eny parson or psones of the said company of the XXIIII, or betweene eny other of the said Towne of Walsall, that then they to abyde the ordnaunce, dome, and jugement of the sayd counsel and brethern, that haue no interest in the sayd mater of variaunce. And if they will not abyde the sayd ordnaunce as is before rehersed, eny one of theym, or he beyng in defaut, to forfeit vis. viii*d.* to the Burges-Box, to be leuyed by the Bayly of the Broughe, and he to have iii*d.* for doyng his office.

VIII. ALSO it is ordeyned and stablyshed, that if eny man, man's son, servnt, or prntyse (apprentice) within the Towne, dwellynge be founden at eny alehouse, or at eny prevey place, plaiying at eny unlawefull games, except in Cristemas, as dyce, tables, cardes, cloke, tenys, foteball, or eny other lyke contrarie to the statute of this lande and ordnaunce of the same towne, then they that so be founden in defaute, to be taken and put in pryon, and paye vi*d.* for his fyne to the Box, for his defaute-makyng, that to be leuyed by the Bayly, and hee to have of them for his office-doyng, iii*d.* *prouyded allway, that eny of the XXIIII, or an honeste man in theyre company, may play at tables for an ob, ale, but not custumably.*

IX. ALSO it is ordeyned, that who soevr suffer eny dyce-player, or carder, tenys player, or other unlawefull gamer, to use unlawefull games in theyr house, to lose for eny suche defaute vis. viii*d.* according to the Statutes of this londe.

X. ALSO it is ordeyned, that if any man's son, servante, or prntyse, or any other comon sytter up, be taken in the strete, or at alehouse aft. ix of the clok, from the fest of Saynt Mychell th' archangell, unto the fest of th'anunciacon of oure Ladye; and aft. x of the clok from the feest of th'anunciacon of oure Ladye unto the fest of Saynt Mychell, withoute a lefull excuse, they to be had to pryon; and the Bayly to have for his office doyng of eny one

so taken, and able and suffyent to pay $iiid.$ to the Burges-Box. And if the party be insuffycyent, then to remayne in pryon duryng the Meyer's ples^r and his brethren.

XI. Also it is ordeyned, that if eny man kepe eny at the ale or sportyng in theyre houses, aft. the howers appoyned, to make a fyne, therfore, and to sessed by the Mayer. And if by ons or twyes warnyng, do not amend, then the same ale house to be put downe by the comandent of the Mayer and his brethren.

XII. Also it is ordeyned, that if eny person mysorder them in worde or dede, ayenst (against) the Stuard, Understuard, Mayer, Bayly, or other Officers, or ayenst any of the XXIIII, that then he that so offendith and mdsorderith hymself, and brekyth this ordenne, shall obey the correctons of the Mayer and officers for the tyme beyng, and the XXIIII, or els to avoyd the Towne withyn vii dayes warnyng after suche offence, or defaute done and proved, uppon payne of $xxs.$ and that to be levyyed by the Bayly to the use of the Burgess-Box, taking $iiiid.$ for his office.*

XIII. Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer of the Boroughe of *Walsall* for the tyme beyng, shall make and receyue Burgesses in his yere, accordyng to the olde custume: but eny man soe admytted shalbe sworne in lyke maner as is ordeyned in the $iiid$ article of this Roll. And upon Seynt Clements-day, the said Mayer shall accompt before the newe Mayer and v or vi of his brethren, by hym to be appoyned, and before suche other of the brethren as wilbe there, as well of alle such Burgesses as the seyd olde Mayer hathe made and receyued in his year, as of all oþyr causes concnyng his sayd office. And the olde Mayer at the said accompte, to paye his money for the sayd Burgesses, and alle other dueties to the newe Mayer, and then the same Burgesses to be re-gestered and sett in the newe Burgess Rolle for ev^r. And the said money to be put in to the Burgess Box, and the Boxe to remayne and be put in the Treure Cofer tyll the next accompte.

XIV. Also it is ordeyned, that eny Burgess shall paye the one halfe of his fyne at his admyttence, and the other halff when the Mayer gooth oute of his office: but if eny Burgess be unpaid his

* This appears rather a severe punishment for such an offence. How would banishment for disobedience to the local authorities be tolerated now a days!

money, or eny pt. therof, when the olde Mayer comyth to his accompt and will not paye it then, that then they to be clerely dyscharged of theyr admyttance, and nev aft. to be receuyed: but if hee or they paye *xs.* for the fyne of the newe admyttance.

ORDYNANCE FFOR THE CHURCHE.

XV. Also it is ordeyned, stablyshed, and aggred, that the Masters of Saynt John's Gylde, the Mayer and Wardens, shall not make gift or graunt of eny donacion of eny Chantrey, nor lese or letting of eny lyvelode belongyng to the said Gyldes, withoute the assent of the XXIIII, or the more part of the best and sadest (oldest) of them. And also that none of the XXIIII, nor none within the Towne and dwellyng, shall make eny labour or sute to eny of the patrons for eny donacon (donation) of eny of the said Chantrees withoute the assent and consent of the Masters of the Gylde, and the more part of the XXIIII.

XVI. Also it is ordeyned that when eny of the said Chantres of eny or bothe Gyldes fallen voide, that then the Masters of the Gylde or Wardens shall uppon payne or forfeiture of *vis. viiiid.* immediately make instance seute and labour to the Patrons of the sayd servyse so fallyng voide, that the sayd Patrons shall in the honour of God, sd. Lady, and Saynt John Baptist, to be so good Masters to the Towne of *Walsall*, as to admitt such Priste or Pристes as be able in conyng of pryksonge,* to maynten, kepe, and upholde the queer, (choir) whereby Godd's suice (service) shalbe the bett^r mayntened and kept, and also that they may be honest and weldisposed, and of good convsacion in bodely lyuyng, (living) and also that they be neyther disards (prattlers) ne carders, (card-players)

XVII. Also it is ordeyned, that yerely when eny Masters of the Gylde shalbe chosen aft. the Gylde fest, accordyng to the olde custome, that then the olde Masters of the Gylde shall by byll indented and triptite (of three parts) imediately aft. the said election, delyvr to the newe Masters alle the money, plate, jewels and evydences, and alle other stuff that belongeth to theyr kepyng, and to the said Gylde so that it may be knownen with what thynges the newe Masters shall be charged with at theyr incomyng, and at

* Reading written Music, or Chanting from Notes.

theyr accompte makyng, and the one byll to remayne with the newe Masters, and other with th olde Masters, and the III in Saynt John's Cofer.

XVIII. Also it is ordeyned, that the Churchewardens, both of the body of the Churche, of our Ladye, Saynt Clement, Saynt Kateryn, and Saynt Nicholas, with alle other members, shall com to theyr accomptes, uppon Saynt Kateryn's-day, before the Mayor and v or vi of his brethern, by the said Mayer to be appoynted, and before such other of the brethern as will be there ; and if they or eny of them be not at the said Day, redy to make theyr accomptes, then they that so be in defaute, to forfeit vis. viiid. to be leuyed as is before said, and to be put to the Burges-Boxe.

XIX. Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer for the tyme beyng, shall truely calle uppon the old Mayer, with alle the Wardens above rehersed, and other Officers under them to make theyr accomptes before hym at the dayes above wrytten. And also he shall geve warnyng to v or vi of his said brethern, with other as it is aforesayd to be there at the said accomptes ; and if he be negligent therein, and doe not accordyng to this ordennce, he to forsyf and paye to the Burges-Box, xs. and if the olde Mayer be not redy with his accompts at the sayd day, then he to forsyf and paye vis. viiid. to the Burges-Box. And if eny defaute be in eny of the brethern that shalbe warnedby the Mayer to be there at any of the accomptes ; then eny of them proved in defaute, withe out reasonable excuse, shall forsyf iiid. and it to be leuyed as is abouesayd.

XX. Also it is ordeyned for the more suertye and saufgard of the tresure of the said Gylde, that therbe iiii keys of the tresor coffer belongyng to Saynt John, and that the Masters of the Gylde shall haue one of the grete keyes in kepyng, the Mayer shall haue the kepyng of one of the lytel keyes, and in his absence, the Constable and one of the sadest and weldesposed Prest of Saynt John's Gylde, that shalbe assigned by the Mayer and Masters of the Gylde for the tyme being, to have the kepyng of the other small keye, to that nother one of thies psones, ne no other shall open the said Coffer, withe oute the consent and assent of alle the other. And also it is ordeyned, that the sayd iiii psones that be lymyted to the kepyng of the said iiii keyes, shall not open the same Cofer

withoutte the psence of iiiii or v, or mo of the most honest brethern of the said Gylde, beyng of the XXIIII: and if this rule be broken, or if any of Seynt John's godes (goods) be imbellished or stolen, in theyre defaute, that then they to make restitucion, and it to be layde unto theyre charge; and if they breke this ordenunce, to forfeit x marcs (6l. 13s. 4d.) to Saynt John's Boxe. And that alle theyre keyes be brought forthe at alle tymes when it shalbe thoughte necessary by the Masters of the Gylde and the Mayer.

XXI. Also it is ordeyned and condescended by the aggrement of my Lord Barnes, Sir Robt. Sheffeld Knyght, Richard Litelton, and Roulond Hethe, of *Bloxwiche*, Patrons of iiiii Chantrees, belonging to oure Ladye's Gylde, that for the more suertye and saufgard of the tresour and euydence of that Gylde, that therby iii keyes of the Coffer, wher the tresour is, and the Masters of Seynt John's Gylde to haue the kepyng of the one keye, and the Wardens of our Ladye is Gild to haue the kepyng of the iij^d keye, and one of the saddest prests of the same Gylde to haue the kepyng of the thirde keye; and this ordenunce to be kept in payne of x marcs, as it is rehersed before in the ordenunce of the Gylde of Saynt John Baptyst.

In the year 1496, John Arundel, then bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, by a decree or confirmation under the Episcopal Seal of the Diocese,—directed to the Mayor of Walsall and his brethren, in honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, the beloved Mary and all Saints, and for the advantage of Walsall Church, &c.,—declares “that they (the Maior and his bredren) shal kepe ther drynkynges iiiii tymes in the yere; and hee that is absent at ony of those drynkynges, to forfeit a pounde of waxe, to burne for the light of the chapell of Saynte Kateryn in the sayd churche. Item the Wardens shall cause the Priste to geve monyon (monition) bothe in the churche of Walsall, and in the chapell of Bloxwyche, iv dayes before every drynkyng, under the like forfeitt of a pounde of waxe to the sayd altar.”* Thus the hierarchy in those days made even the festivities of the “Maior and his bredren,” subservient to the interests of the altar.

* This curious and ancient document is written partly in Latin and partly in English, and is one of the earliest in which mention is made of the Mayor.

The same curious “ordeynance” of Bishop Arundel, directs the Wardens to make a true “accompt” before the Mayor yearly, on Saint Clement’s day, (23 November) which may still be considered the rent day of the Corporation.

THE ROYAL PARK.

A ROYAL PARK once skirted the western side of the town, few traces however of its existence now remain, except the name of “Park Farm,” and “Park Brook;” the latter of which separates the parish from the liberty of Bentley. In the time of Henry VIII this park abounded in deer and timber.. The forest laws at that period, though considerably relaxed, (deer killing being at one time punishable with death) were nevertheless very severe, and deer stealing was looked upon as a very heinous offence. A Lord of Parliament might on his way thither kill one of the king’s deer, but he was obliged previously to blow his horn thrice to give the forester notice. From the following amusing document, (which affords curious evidence of the degree of social order attained by the town three centuries ago, and the rule therein established by the local authorities at that period), it would appear that the Lords of Walsall, or the “Mayor and his bredren,” were not very scrupulous in helping themselves to the king’s venison whenever they felt so disposed. The record is thus endorsed:—

“THE EFFECT OF THE BILL IN STARRE CHAMBER AGAYNST BAYARD AND HIS COLTS.”

“In the 16th yeare of Kinge Henry the 8th his raigne, one Robert Hacton, Squire, one of the groomes of the kinge’s chamber, preferred a bill into the Starre Chamber agaynst one Richard Hopkyns, Richard Bingley, and Nich Woodward, of Walsale; wherein hee shewed that whereas hee being possessed of the King’s Manor at Walsale for his lyfe, by virtue of the Kinge’s Letters Patent. They three being wilful and obstinate persons, having wrongfully withelde from him, and so had don along time from the kinge, divers parcels of Land, and divers yearly Rents, Custumes and Servises, payinge nothinge therefor to the Kinge, ne to hym the Patentee and Fermor of the sayd Manor, and doe say and affirm, that they bee free; and have cutt down great Timber Trees in Walsale Parke. That they and other misdemeaned persones have hunted as well by nighte as by day in the Parke, and killed divers of the Kinge’s Deere; wherewith hee, the sayd Robert Hacton, not being contented, hath often required them to forbear, and required them to paye the yearly Custumes, Rentes, and

Servises which belonged to theyre tenures, or els he wuuld noe longer suffer them in theyre evyl doinges, but would complain to the King. Whereupon the sayd Hopkyns, Bingley, and Woodward, openly sayd to the sayd Robert Hacton, that if he would not suffer them to doe as they had done in times past, *they would raise Bayard of Walsale with his thousand Colts*, and sett and appoint four hundred men to revenge their quarrels upon him; and that *they would ring Bayard's Bell*,^{*} so that all the Towne of Walsale should arise forthwith by the means thereof, whether the matter were right or wronge. And sheweth that the Inhabitants of the sayd Towne were light persons, suddenly moved to affrays and insurrections, (as was well known); and the rather because Bayard and his thousand Colts being *great Clubbes*,[†] and have bin of louge time *sett and hanged upp on hige in the Town Hall of Walsale*; and there beeene taken and reputed in as much honour and worshipp as they were saincts in the Churche; and bee at *certain times in the yeare solemnly borne about the Towne in great reverence*; which thing to bee suffered is a great abomination, and the worst example for the mayntenance of evyl rule within the sayd Towne that can be devised. And for that the sayd evyl and disordered persones intend to be borne and meytained in theyre ungracious actes and quarrells by them daylie done, they have a certayne Boxe called *Bayard's Boxe*,[‡] in the which be grayte sums of money purposely for the same Boxe gathered, to meytaine theyre evyl doings and demeanours in the premises, &c." Then sheweth that "they three and eight others more ryotously assembled & forcibly entered into a mill, parcell of the sayd Manor, &c. And desired subpcenas agaynst Hopkins, Bingley, and Woodward, and a commission to be directed to certain worshipful persones, as well as to enquire of certain ryotts lately commytted within the sayd Towne of Walsale, by the ringyng of *Bayard's Bell*, by the sayd Bingley, Hopkins, Woodward, and other evyl disposed persones, upon one John Cootes and John Stanley, Esquires, of the county of Stafford, which they do intend to meytaine by the custome belonginge to Bayard and his Colts, &c.; and also for the withdrawinge his yearly rents, customes, and servises, bondmen, and the wrongful occupyingns of the Kinge's lands, parcell of the said Manor, and of the sayd waste, huntinge, and of all other artycles and matters in the Bill specified; with all other causes and matters that shall be shewed and alledged for ye Kinge before the said Commissioners."

It would seem that Queen Elizabeth was either ignorant of, or had forgotten the conduct of the men of Walsall to her royal father, as her munificence to the town proved greater than any former or subsequent benefactor. In one of her recorded "Progresses" through her dominions in the months of June and July, 1586, she appears

* Vide Code of Laws, Section V.

+ These Clubes were formerly carried before the Mayor on proclaiming fairs, &c. They are still preserved in the Guild Hall,—vide page 37.

‡ The "Burgesses Box" so frequently mentioned in the Code of Laws.

to have honoured Walsall with her royal presence; and from facts on record, it is evident that the "Chevalier Bayard," and his "thousand Colts," must have made a very favourable impression on the heart of the "Virgin Queen," so as to have induced her to re-grant to the town the manor and estates of Bascot and Long Etchington, in Warwickshire.* Shaw (as already stated in page 34 of this work) affirms that there is no authority for the Queen's visit to Walsall, but tradition. Hamper also, in his "Life and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale," observing from Sir William's diary, that Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles the I, was at Walsall on the 8th July, 1643, and connecting that circumstance with the tradition alluded to, infers, that "the name of the 'Virgin Queen' had been evidently mistaken for that of Henrietta Maria." Both versions however are incorrect. This is sufficiently substantiated by the fact, that the grant of the estates, before mentioned, and still preserved amongst the archives in the town chest, not only bears her seal, but concludes thus—"Teste me ipsa apud Walshall; tertio decimo die Julii Anno regni nostri vicecessimo octavo." (Witnessed by me myself at Walsall this thirtieth day of July in the twenty-eighth year of our reign). No doubt, therefore, can exist with respect to both Elizabeth and Henrietta having visited the town of Walsall.

The annexed interesting letter,† from Sir William Dugdale, Garter Principal King of Arms, to Mr. Thomas Wollaston, of Walsall, (written whilst Sir William was engaged in his invaluable "History of Warwickshire"), shows from what source he obtained much of his information respecting the manor of Bascot, the succession of which he traced from the conquest.

For my worthy friend,
Mr. Thomas Wollaston,
Sir, At his house, in Walshall.

Your kinde Ire. (letter) dated 29th Nov., by wch you had bin pleased to give me answer to the particular queres concerning the manour of Bascotte, that I sent to my brother Hunbache to entrete your resolution in, came to me but yesterday, else would I have sooner returned my thanks to you for the favour herein vouchsafed.

* Vide History of Molealy's Dole, under the head of "Inquiry into the Charities."

† This letter was published for the first time in 1831; the original was then in the library of a gentleman of this town.

And now, forasmuch as you have given me this light, in letting me know that Sir Raph Rochford graunted it to Thomas Seyvill: I shall intreat you to informe me whether you have any evidence to discover how it came to Rochford from the Crowne; for I can trace downe the succession of it even from the conquest till 18 Edw. II. that it escheated to the Kinge by the attaynder of Peter de Limessay, who was in the rebellion with Thomas Earle of Lancaster.

This Sir Raphe Rochford was possessed of Arley in this Countie, and soe was Sir John Rochford who was his father I thinke, and Arley did likewise belongeto the sayde Peter de Limessay, and was his ancestors for a longe time before.

I am very sorry your antient writings concerning this mannour or any thing else were soe spoyled; it hath bin the fate of many men's evidences in the late turmoyles, the more pitty.

Sir, I beseech you when you answer this letter, be pleased to adde the dayes of the date, as well as the yeares of the Kinge in those severall conveyances, viz., from Sir Raphe Rochford to Seyvill, from Thomas Lee to Thomas Molesley, and from Thomas Molesley to the towne of Walshall.

I have somethinge expressinge that Thomas Molesley was of Moxhall in this countye, if soe sure it was by mariage with a widow of one of the Lisles, but of this I am not very confident, neither is it materiall whither he was or not, perhaps Moxhall was mistaken for Walshall, but certaynely he and Henry Flaxhall founded a Chantrye at Walshall, for I have taken notice from the record it selfe, whereby certaine landes were graunted from the Crowne yt belonged thereto, in which it is expressly sayd to be of their foundation, but it beinge out of this Countye, I am not concern'd to looke after it.

Sir, I pray you pardon this my boldnesse with you, and when you shall think me in a condition to serve you any way, you shall finde none more ready then

Your assured friend,
And Servant,

Blythhall, near Colshill,
12th Dec. 1650.

WILLIAM DUGDALE.

STATEMENT OF EXPENSES INCURRED IN PROCURING THE FIRST CHARTER OF THE CORPORATION OF WALSALL.

In submitting a copy of this antient and interesting manuscript entitled "Charges about our Corporation;" a few preliminary comments may not prove unserviceable:—

It will be observed that the expenses of procuring the Charter were incurred in the month of June, 1627, (3 Charles I), and the Charter itself bears date 20 July following.

The four persons who went to London to obtain the Charter may be collected from the names in the account, viz., Richard

Stone, Henry Stone (his son), Joseph Clarkson, and one Curteys or Robert Stone. These men, at that period, being all of property and influence in Walsall. Henry Stone and Richard Stone are mentioned as two of the first "Capital Burgesses" in the Charter.

The payments in the account for searching in Chancery for Langthorne, and for William Parker's will, has reference to John Parker's Charity by will, 3 August, 1620, as to 8*l.* payable out of the manor of Langthorne, in the county of York, for preaching annually 16 Sermons, four in Walsall, four in Rushall, and eight in Bloxwich; and also as to William Parker's will, 24 May, 1613, by which he gave to the "Merchant Tailors' Company" 400*l.* to purchase lands, &c., to pay 20*l.* a year to the minister of Bloxwich Chapel.

<i>"CHARGES ABOUT OURE CORPORACON."</i>				<i>£ s. d.</i>
Spente in going to London, 4 of vs (us)	...	...	...	xxx
To mr. walste for his Councill	...	...	..	xx
To his man for wryting oure artycles in pap. (paper)	...	...		v
To mr. wakeringe for his advyse and direcion 2 sevral tyme				xx
To 2 Scryvens for Ingrossing oure artycles in pchmt 2 severall tyme for the kynge	...	...	...	viii
To my lo. keeps (Lord keeper's) secretaire for exhibitinge oure peticon and gettinge vs an annsweare	...	...		x
To his man to remeber his wde	...	...	...	ii vi
Payd for a Statute booke	...	...	...	vii ii
ffor another booke, viz. the paper Booke basted	...	...		i iv
To the Scryven for makinge our bonde to mr. Rbt. Stone and mr. Calke	...	...	...	v
To mr. Allison for Drawinge the king's Attorney his answears to the kinge	...	...	...	x
Payd for a Sugar lofe for mrs. Lacy	...	...	...	xviii vi
ffor another for mrs. Berrington	...	...	...	xvi vi
gave her Children and Svants when the kings hand was gotten				vi
To mr. Wigmore for drawinge oure booke extraordynarie and for expedicon	...	...	...	x
To his man to make spedē to Ingrosse itt	...	...	...	vi
Payd for the hyre of 2 horses to the courts for mr. Berrington and mr. Thacker	...	...	...	iii iv
To mr. Attorney for allowinge oure Artycles and for his paynes				x
To his Secretare and mr. Wigmore for Drawinge and Ingrossinge oure booke being XC sheetes att 2 <i>s.</i> a sheete	...			ix
To the dore kep. for his fee	...	...	...	xx
To mr. Berrington uppon oure agreemt to pcure the kinge's warrant to mr. Attorney and his hande, 3 sevral tyme				xx
Carried Forward	...	...	...	xlviii xix iv

	£	s.	d.
Brought Forward ...	xlviii	xix	iv
ffor Ingrossinge our booke for the Signett, being 3 tymes of pymt	xx		
ffor the lyke for the pryy seale ...	xx		
ffor the fees of the Signett for 3 skynnes of pchmt, att 3l. a skynne	ix		
ffor the lyke for the pryy seale ...	ix		
To my Lo. pryy seale, viz., my Lo. of Worcester, his Secretare } for expedicon for the Signett and pryy seale ...	xx		
To the Clarks of the Chamber for their fees ...	xx		
To the King's pryncypall Secritarie, viz: my Lo. Conwey, his } man when he got the king's hande ...	xx		
To Councill for prestinge (presenting) oure booke after itt was drawen and after itt was Ingrossed ...	xx		
Left att london to dyscharge the greate Scale... ...	xx		
Payd for searchinge in the Chancery for Langthorne and for mr. Wm. pkrs. (Parkers) will in the prgatyve courts ...	iii	iv	
Spente in wyne and dyners att sevrall tymes to mr. Delves, mr. Berrington and others to further oure suyte ...	ii	xi	iv
To Curteys for hyringe mr. Rich. Stones horse ...	i	iii	vi
ffor 2 leather baggs ...	ii		iv
ffor lynsy stockings and socks for mr. h. Stone ...	ii		ii
ffor coton broges for him ...	i		vi
ffor mr. h. Stones horse and pvender in london ...	xi		ii
ffor Jo. Clarkson's horse there ...	ii		vi
Spente by h. Stone when he came home... ...	xii		
Oure charges for oure dyett whylst we laye in london ...	vi	xviii	iii
Payd for oure washinge and to the poore in london ...	viii		vii
ffor oure 2 horses pvender and hay ...	ii	xi	iii
Gave the chamblyns, ostlers, and mayds att Bisoms Inne ...			iv
ffor shewinge oure horses ...	ii		
Spente by vs 2 (us two) from london home ...	xviii		
Total ...	cix	xi	xi

ENDOWMENT OF WALSALL VICARAGE.

DATED 1248.

WALSALL { "THE APPROPRIATION OF THE SAID CHURCH AND
THE SETTLING OF THE VICARAGE, BY ROGER,
BISHOP OF COVENTRY AND LICHFIELD."

To ALL the faithful in Christ to whom this present writing shall come, Roger, by the Grace of God, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and Richard, Treasurer of Lichfield, eternal health in the Lord. KNOW ALL OF YOU, that when Henry by the Grace of

* The original is written in Latin, on a small piece of parchment, and endorsed
"Impropriatio Vicarise ecclesiae de Walsall et ordinatio Vicarise."

God, the Illustrious King of England, gave to the Abbot and Convent of Halesowen, the patronage of the Church of Walsall, (which church of the aforesown order his father had founded, wishing that the fruits of the church should be yielded to the use of the aforesaid,) the same abbot and convent gave themselves up to our decree with regard to the aforesaid church and its appurtenances which is more fully set forth in their letters patent above made. WE, THEREFORE,—approving the pious disposition in the Lord, of our Lord the King, desiring also the advancement of the said religious persons, to whom on account of the conflux of strangers, (as it is reported), sufficient opportunity is not afforded at being present at the Divine hymns, and out of reverence of the same Lord the King, and at his desire, and with the consent of the Chapter of Lichfield,—have decreed that, when the Master Vincent, Rector of the Church of Walsall, shall have given up or yielded to him, *then* the said abbot and convent may have the said Church of Walsall, with its appurtenances and fruits, to convert them to their proper use, thirteen marks (8*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*) being reserved to the vicarage, to be paid to the vicar from certain incomes of the church, by faithful and discreet persons, deputed by the bishop for this purpose, who shall also divide the area and buildings of the church between the aforesaid religious persons and the vicar, as they in consideration may think fit. THE VICAR for the time being shall pay the accustomed burthens and dues to the bishop and the archdeacon. But, for the support of the accustomed burdens and services due to them from the chapels of the church of Walsall, to wit, of Wednesbury and Rushall,* the same vicar shall have (besides the thirteen marks above given to him,) all the revenues of the above chapels, except the sheaves of corn; which revenues, if they shall not be sufficient to bear the service and burdens of the aforesaid chapels, according to the aforesown form, the vicar shall be provided by the above written men from other income of the church, together with those revenues from whence he may be able honestly to bear the same burdens and services in the above-named chapels. But the said abbot and

* It is quite clear from this, that the old parish church of Wednesbury, and also the parish church of Rushall were originally subordinate to the church at Walsall.

vicar shall bear the other burdens according to their respective proportions. Provided, nevertheless, the abbot and convent so mentioned shall pay annually to the church at Lichfield six marks (4l.) which we have decreed at the petition of the aforesaid abbot and convent, for their peaceable possession of the aforesaid church, over which the church of Lichfield sometimes claimed a right out of the aforesaid six marks. We have decreed sixty shillings for the support of the repairs of the church of Lichfield, the remainder to the twenty vicars, who are deputed alternately, every year, according as the custom is, to celebrate the mass of the blessed Virgin; the above-mentioned money to be given to them by the chaplain of the blessed Virgin, to whom the twenty shillings ought then to be paid; but the sixty shillings to him who is deputed to take care of the fabric, at the under written periods, so that three marks be paid at Lichfield upon the feast of Saint Michael, and the three remaining upon the feast of the annunciation of our Lord. The above-mentioned abbot of Halesowen (for the time being) shall swear that he will faithfully pay the aforesaid six marks at the above written periods. But it shall not be lawful for the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield to convert the said money to any other than the above-mentioned use. IN WITNESS to and for the confirmation of these presents and premises, we have given effect to these pages by our seals, and by the seals of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield and Coventry, and of the abbot and convent of Halesowen. In testimony of their assent, be it however reserved to the church of Coventry and Lichfield the pontifical and parochial authority done at Lichfield, the day after the blessed Thomas the Martyr, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and forty-eight."

The following curious document was copied by Shaw, from the original, in the British Museum.

"GRINDING OF CORNE AT THE LORD'S MILLS," A.D. 1396.

"CONCERNING THE GRINDING OF CORNE, BY
THE INHABITANTS OF WALSHALE, AT THE
LORD'S MILLS, 19 RICHARD II. (1396).

"MIND that Thomas, earle of Warwick, lord of Walshale, the xixth of Kyng Richard the Seconde, sends his servants and counsellours, Thomas

Knight, parson of the church of Hanslape, surveiour of the londs of the sayd earle; John Hugford and William Spernors, squyeres, to his towne and lordship of Walshale, for the oversyght and good governance of the sayd towne and lordship. And there at that tyme on Jenkyn Cole, fermour of my sayd lorde's mylle in Walshale, yeald the portmylle, complaynde to my sayd lorde's conseil, that the burgesses of the burgh of Walshale, wolde not grynde at my sayd lorde's mylne, as hit was there decrete and how they caryde there corne to Ruysshale mylne, and to oder dyvers mylnes in the contre, and grond there corne and malte from my sayd lorde's mylnes, to the gret prejudice and hurt to the sayd Jenkyn, sole fermour of my sayd lorde's mylne, whereof he preyeth remedye; the whiche matyere and complaynt wel conseyyde and understondon by my sayd lorde's conseils, they sende for all the burgeses of the sayd burgh of Walshale, to come before them, and answer to the complaynt above rehersede. Of the whiche matyere my sayd lordes conseil examynede the sayd tenentes and burgesses, as well severally as generally; and there the sayd conseil of my lord of Warrewyk, fondon by the others of XII men of the sayd tenenantes and burges, and also by feyr evidence in wryting that was shewede, that the sayd burges of Walshale be at there fredom to grynde where they lyste, and to carye there corne and malt, or do hit to be cariode to what mylne that hym best lyste that owneth the sayd corne or malt; and upon thyss matyere thus foundon, my sayd lordes conseil cald before hem the sayd Jenkyn Cole, fermour of my sayd lordes mylnes, and bede hym, and conselede hym, that he shulde fryndon hym before wyth the burgeses of Walshale, and that he shulde gete him a conyng mylner, and serve trewely my lordes tenantes; and in syche maner trete hem, that he myghte have ther gode wylles; and by syche menes drawe to hym the gryst of the sayd towne of Walshale, for they oughte not to compelle hem to grynde at my sayd lorde's mylne in Walshale, for hit ys at hore owne fredom to grynde where hem lyste."

Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, the lord named in the above document; his son, Thomas, and grandson, Richard (all earls of Warwick and lords of Walsall) were interred in St. Mary's, Warwick.

The most remarkable one of this family was Henry Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, whose extraordinary skill and bravery secured the crown for Edward IV. (1461), and afterwards, (not however without just cause of offence) released the imbecile Henry from captivity, and re-established him on his throne (1470). A parliament was called, which confirmed Henry's title with great solemnity, and Warwick was himself received among the people under the title of the "King-maker."

Comines who, was sent to Calais to the Duke of Burgundy, to treat with Vanclere (deputy governor there, under Warwick) reports "He was so popular that every one wore his badge;" no man esteeming himself gallant, whose head was not adorned with his ragged staff; insomuch as Vanclere himself wore a jewel in his hat, wherein was a black ragged staff embroidered with gold." The earl's extraordinary hospitality is thus recorded by Stowe, "At his house in Warwick-lane, London, were lodged 600 men, all in red jackets, embroidered with ragged staves before and behind, and six oxen were usually eaten at breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat, for who that had any acquaintance in his family, should have as much sodden and roast as he might carry on a long dagger.*

**WARRANT GRANTED AT THE SESSIONS, NOVEMBER 1636,
AGAINST DIVERS PERSONS FOR NOT ATTENDING CHURCH.**

(From the Original).

"TO THE CONSTABLE AND CHURCHEWARDENS OF WALSALL BOROUGH."

"THESE are to will and require you, and in his Majesties name, to charge and command you that you levie of the severall psons undernamed, the severall sums of money imposed upon them for their severall offences after mentioned, in which they are severally convicted before us at ye sessions held at Wallsall, the eighth day of November, 1636. Given under our hands and seales ye tenth day of ye sayd November, *Anno Ante dictam.*

	s. d.
of Richard Stone, Lorymore,† for his absence from Churche Three Sabbath Dayes together	... ... ... ... iii
of Agnes Stone, ye wife of Richard Stone, for ye like	... iii
of Robert Bord, for ye like ...	... iii
of John Allan, for ye like	... iii
of Edward Brookes, for ye like	... iii
of Nicholas Sheppard, for ye like	... iii
of Rapha Robinson, als. (<i>alias</i>) Hickles, for ye like	... iii
of John Morley, for ye like	... iii
of Jeane Morley, widowe, for ye like	... iii
of Edward Hollmer, for ye like ...	... iii
of John Blackham, for ye like	... iii
of Richard Darbie, for ye like	... iii

* Stowe's Survey of London, edit. 1603, p. 88.

† Lorimer, or bridle bit maker.

	s.	d.
of John Berkson, for ye like	...	...
of Nicholas Hopkins, als. Gateley, for ye like	...	...
of John Clemson, for ye like	...	...
of William Madeley, for ye like, on Sunday ye sixth of Nov. 1636	...	ii
And if any of ye ps ons abovesayd shall refuse or neglect to pay their severall forfeitures, and you can find noe distres whereon to levie the same, that then you or the constable shall comit ye ps ons so refusing or not handing goods whereon to levie ye said forfeitures into any of his majesties gaols of ye burrowe and fforren of Wallsall, there to remaine untill they shall have made payment of their sayd severall forfeitures, and this shall be your sufficient warrant therin.		
of Richard Stokes, shooemaker, for selling ale whout lycence, contrary to the Laws	...	...
of Alice Jones for ye like	...	...
of George Clarkson, for suffering divers ps ons to continue tipling and drinkinges in his house, in evening prayer time on the Sabbath Day	...	xx
of John Smith, of ye Windmill field gate, for suffering Mr. William Mountfort, Robert Curteys, senr., and John Curteys, and Robert Curteys, junr. to continue drinkinges in his house on ye Sabbath Day in evening prayer time	...	x
And for want of a distres whereon to levie the sayd forfeitures, you, the constable, shall comit them to ye gaole, there to remain untill they have made payment thereof		
of Mr William Mountfort, for drinking in ye house of the said John Snyth, on ye Sabbath Day in the time of evening prayer		
of Robert Curteys for ye like	...	iii
of John Curteys for ye like	...	iii
of Robert Curteys for ye like	...	iii
And if they or any of them shall refuse to pay their severall forfeitures of iis iiiid a piece, and that you can find noe distres nor person to levie the same; that then you, ye constable, shall sett ye ps ons so refusing, or not handing goods whereon to levie ye sayd forfeitures, in ye Stockes, there to remaine by the space of fourre hours.		
And if you shall take any distres of any of ye ps ons before named, if whin five days after ye takeing thereof, they shall not pay ye forfeitures imposed upon them, then you shall presently apprise and sell ye same, and deliver ye surplusages to ye ptie (party) of whome ye sayd distres was taken.		
And all ye moneys levyed by you for ye premises is to be employed for the use of ye poore of the parische of Wallsall."		
THO. WOLLASTON, <i>Maior.</i>	WILLIAM WEBB.	
JOHN BYRECH, <i>Recorder.</i>		

MANDATES ISSUED BY THE AUTHORITIES DURING THE
PLAUES, in 1637 and 1665.

(*From the Original.*)

"TO THE CONSTABLE OF WALLSALL BURROWE."

"WHEREAS the infection of the plague is dispersed into divers parts of this kingdome, by reason whereof it is verie dangerous to mit strange passengers to stay or abide in our Towne these are therefore to require you that imedyatlie you appoint foure sufficient housekeepers to ward every day, (till you shall have directions to surcease), who shall ward either in their owne p sons, or place some other able men in their turnes, such as you in your discretion shall approve of, who shall stand at every end of the Towne to keepe out all such strangers as shall not bring a certificate that they come from noe infected places. And that you charge the sayd warders that they shall not suffer any suche stranger to stay in the Towne, as they will answare for their remissions at their p ill (peril). And if any whome you shall appoint shalbe refractarie and refuse to ward, or shalbe negligent in their places, that you give us notice of their names & prese (express) their offence; and we have ordered that their good behaviour shall be granted against them; hereof you may not faile, as you will answare for your neglect at your p ill Given under our hands at Wallsall Borouge, the seventeenth day of June, Anno Dom. 1637.

And further that you warne all the Innkeepers, Alehousekeepers, and Victualers, within your constablewick, that they doe not nor shall receive any suche stranger into their houses, withoute ye like certificate, as they will avoyd the penaltie of beinge bound to ther good behaviour and suppression for victuallinge or sellinge ale any longer."

THO WOLLASTON, *Maior,*

HENRYE STONE,

WILLIAM WEBB.

In the memorable year of 1665—when the great plague broke out in London, and raged so fearfully that nearly 70,000 persons were swept off by its ravages*—an order of a similar nature to the foregoing (and of which the annexed is a copy) was issued by the local authorities, who appear to have adopted the most precautionary measures for the preservation of the town during that calamitous period.

"WALSALL, | AN ORDER OF THE MAYOR AND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE OF THE
26 AUG. 1665 | BURROUGH AND FFORREN OF WALSALL."

"Whereas wee apprehend the greate ganger of the carriers going to and returning from London, having found by sad experience that for their owne

* The year following was also terribly distinguished by the great fire in the city, which destroyed no fewer than 89 churches and 13,000 houses.

private advantage, (having at present double and treble the pay for carriage than they had formerly), have not refused to bring down both persons and goods to their owne knowledge out of infected parishes and places, to the endangering not only of themselves and families, but of the whole towne and countrey. And also being induced hereunto by the late danger wee were in by the death of a young man, (wtch is not yet over).* That if it please god to prevent oure feares, it shd not only lay an obligation of thankfulnes for oure greate deliverance, but ingage us for the future to use oure utmost diligence and endeavours for prevention of the like danger, doe hereby order in manner and forme following, that is to say,

1. That if any carrier shall for the future desperately adventure to travell to London untill it shall please God upon the removeall or good abatement of the sicknes wee may goe wth lesse danger and more safety; and shall presume to come home to his owne house at Walsall, that his house shall be shutt upp for the space of one month at the least.

2. That noe inhabitant presume to enterteine any such carrier or their servants into their houses or companies by the space of one month after their retorne from London, or receive any goods or wares brought downe by them before the same have been aired by the space of one month at the least, upon the payne of having their house shutt up, and to be otherwayes p cceeded against as dangerous persons & contemnors of Authority.

3. That noe inhabitant within the liberties of the burrough and fforren aforesaid, shall hereafter presume to enterteyne anye passengers brought by the carriers or otherwise, only ife they make it appeare by legall testimony that they have been out of the Citty and suburbs of London by the space of one month at the least, and untill they may receive them with more safety upon the like payne.

4. Lastly, that all inhabitants, householders within the liberties of the sayd burrough and fforren, doe watch and ward with either their owne persons, or others that shall be approved of by the constables, at suche times and places as the constables shall appointe. And that the warders continue in their ward untill the watch come to relieve them at night, and the watchers continue their watch untill the warders come to relieve them in the morning, upon payne of every one being found negligent in any of the premises, to be bound to their good behaviour;

RICHARD BLACKHAM, *Maior.*

JOHN SAUNSON,

WILLIAM SMITH.

* "The death of a young man, (wtch is not yet over)." This phraseology bears a striking analogy to an "Irish Bull;" as, however, Bulls of the same genus are not unfrequently met with in this country—even in the town of "Walsall in England"—it may be safely concluded that the "Maior and his brethern," who issued the above "Bull," were Walsallians; or, at all events, Anglo-Saxons, and not Hibernians, as might otherwise be reasonably inferred.

The following items, extracted from a constable's account, for the year ending October, 1662, will doubtless be read in the present day with some interest.

"THE ACCOUNT OF HENRYE WOOD, CONST BE OF WALSALL BOROUGH, MADE THE TWENTYE-FOURTH OF NOVEMBER, OF WHAT HEE HATH DISBURST FOR THE TOWNE, FROM OCTOBER, 1661, UNTILL OCTOBER, 1662."

	£ s. d.
ffor sending of a hew and cry to Rushall	00 00 03
ffor sending of a hew and cry to Barre	00 00 03
Gave to a man and his wife and six children, that came with a passe	00 01 06
hire of a horse six days to Stafford, when I went in with the souldiers	00 06 00
ffor charges of him for hay and oates	00 06 08
ffor my owne charges there	00 11 06
paid to the souldiers for there pay for eight dayes	02 08 00
ffor carrying of there armes	00 02 00
ffor four pound of gunpowder and a halfe	00 06 00
paid to the muster master	00 03 00
paid for the keeping of Jane Liddiat a day & night	00 01 00
ffor getting the <i>cuck stoole</i> * out of ye towne brooke	00 00 06
ffor removinge the stockes out of the crosse	00 01 02
paid for makeing the assesment bookees	00 02 00
paid for charges at the assessing of ym	00 02 00
ffor a horse to goe to lichfield for ye signeing of ym	00 01 00
paid to 45 clubmen y ^t walked y ^e fair...	00 07 06
paid to six warders	00 05 00
ffor keeping of a child at Stafford	00 00 04
ffor my horse at Shelfield, and my charges	00 00 10
paid to ye high constable for maimed souldiers	00 10 00
paid to frances * * * for clips for ye pounds	00 01 04
paid for a pound and a halfe of gunpowder, that was shot away upon ye kinge's holy day	00 02 00
paid to a messenger to fetch ye coronour to sit upon mason's child, and sending his warrant abroad	00 01 04
ffor a horse too dayes and a night, and his charges	00 03 09
ffor a horse too days more, when I went to give in a presentment at Stafford, of those that had been actually in arms against his majestye	00 02 00
ffor charges for him those too days and a night for hay and oats	00 01 09
ffor my owne dyett and expenses there"	00 03 06
&c. &c.	

* "Cucking Stool," which in the Saxon language signifies scolding stool, was an engine for punishing scolds, and refractory women. It was also called a "tumbrel," or "tre bucket." Any woman convicted of being a "common scold," was placed thereon, and afterwards plunged into the water; hence it was familiarly termed the "ducking stool."

VICARS OF WALSALL.

The earliest vicar's signature in the parish register, is that of **WILLIAM WARD, 1571.**

The next of which there is any record, was the Rev. Thomas Byrdall, M.A., who died in April, 1662. He was the author of two works; one called a "Glimpse of God," and the other a volume of eighteen sermons, preached in Walsall church. The first was published in 1665, three years after his decease, by the Rev. W. Gearing, and was dedicated to Sir Thomas and lady Wilbraham. In this dedication it is stated that Mr. Byrdall was presented to the living by Sir Richard Wilbraham, grandfather to Sir Thomas. The volume of sermons,—dedicated in like manner,—appeared in 1666, and had prefixed, a funeral discourse, by the Rev. Anthony Burgess, minister of Sutton Coldfield. It is presumed that he was inducted before the troubles, and that when the Liturgy was abolished, he laid it aside, and took the covenant. Whether he re-assumed the Common Prayer after May, 1660, is not known, but his death happening four months previous to the Act of uniformity, would have prevented his being ejected for non-conformity had he persisted its observance. He was succeeded by the Rev. RICHARD BOURN, 1662.

The Rev. JOHN MOSS, vicar in 1708, died A.D. 1733, and was interred in the north chancel. His successor was the Rev. ROBERT FELTON, who was inducted March 16, 1751—2. He departed this life in 1769, and was buried near the vestry, at the entrance of the south west wall—a marble tablet was erected to his memory, bearing the following inscription:—

Near this place lie the remains of
Robert Felton, vicar of this parish near six and
thirty years, born and educated at Newport, in
the county of Salop, from whence he went to
Oxford, and was some time a commoner of
Magdalene hall, where he took a bachelor's
degree; from thence he retired into Shropshire,
where he was sent for by the right honourable Mary,
Countess of Bradford, who generously gave him
this living, without his knowledge or application.
Ob. 29 April, MDCCCLXIX, aetatis 64.

The next in succession was the Rev. JOHN DAEWALL, who died, 1789, and was entombed in a vault in the cemetery. After him, came the Rev. J. S. RUTTER. Then followed, in 1796, the Rev. JOHN DAEWALL, son of the former vicar. He was succeeded by the Rev. P. PRATT, who expired 10 Sep., 1822, sincerely and universally regretted by all denominations. The following account of his funeral is from the diary of a gentleman who knew him well, and was one amongst the many who joined in the mournful procession, which to this day, he is unable to recall without dropping a tear of deepest sorrow.

"The corpse was preceeded from the vicarage by the beadle, sergeant-at-mace and members of the corporation in their robes, six clergymen, and nearly one hundred of the principal inhabitants, all attired in deep mourning, with silk hatbands and gloves (provided at their own expense). The coffin, resting on a bier and covered with a pall, was borne by eight bearers, and supported by six relatives of the deceased. The body was taken into the church, which was densely crowded on the occasion, and service was read in the most affecting manner by the Rev. Joseph Harling, (curate). It was then interred underneath the south east porch. No death in Walsall ever excited more general sympathy, not only on account of the virtues of the deceased, but his distressed family. The gentlemen attending the funeral, afterwards adjourned into the chancel, and there most cheerfully subscribed for the benefit of the bereaved widow and orphans, £340 and upwards, to their everlasting honor, humanity, and benevolence."

Next in rotation, were the Revds. JOHN BARON and G. FISK, who were succeeded by the present highly and deservedly respected vicar, the Rev. J. H. SHABWOOD,

**MAYORS ELECTED ON THE FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL,
UNDER THE CHARTER OF CHS. 1st, (29 SEPT.).**

1636...Thomas Wollaston
1665...Richard Blackham
1691...John Perks
1740...Thomas Bradnock
1741...Samuel Corbett
1742...Martin Pashley
1743...William Haslewood

1744...Charles Steward.
1745...Thomas Nicholls
1746...Thomas Bradnock
1747...Samuel Corbett
1748...Charles Steward
1749...Joseph Spurrier
1750...John Coulson

1751...Samuel Corbett	1793...William Adams
1752...Thomas Nicholls.	1794...Deykin Hemming
1753...Samuel Corbett	1795...William Hipkins
1754...Charles Steward	1796...Thomas Oldham Chinner
1755...Samuel Short	1797...Richard Adams
1756...Thomas Bradnock	1798...William Adams
1757...Samuel Short	1799...John Stubbs
1758...John Wilson	1800...Charles Forster
1759...Samuel Short	1801...James Adams
1760...John Wilson	1802...Walter Spurrier
1761...John Bradnock	1803...Charles Adams
1762...Richard Palmer	1804...John Stubbs
1763...Thomas Huxley	1806...Richard Adams
1764...John Bradnock	1806...James Adams
1765...Richard Palmer	1807...Walter Spurrier
1766...John Taylor	1808...Joseph Curtis
1767...Rev. Robert Felton (Vicar)	1809...Thomas Scott
1768...Thomas Huxley	1810...William Walton
1769...John Taylor	1811...Samuel Wilson
1770...John Bradnock	1812...James Adams
1771...Richard Palmer	1813...Samuel Sharratt
1772...John Taylor	1814...Charles Henry Darwall
1773...John Stubbs	1815...John Wood
1774...Joseph Spurrier	1816...Samuel Fletcher
1775...Thomas Farmer	1817...John Adams
1776...Edward Holmes	1818...Charles Smith Forster
1777...John Smith	1819...Charles Windle
1778...William Elwell, Jun.	1820...William Marshall
1779...Stephen Barber	1821...John Forster
1780...John Farmer	1822...Richard Rutter
1781...John Palmer	1823...Henry Christopher Windle
1782...Charles Forster	1824...Samuel Fletcher
1783...John Stubbs	1825...Charles Henry Darwall
1784...Rev. John Simpson Rutter	1826...John Heeley
1785...Benjamin Mold	1827...Richard Rutter
1786...Charles Windle	1828...Charles Smith Forster
1787...William Elwell, Jun.	1829...Samuel Sharratt
1788...John Stubbs	1830...John Heeley
1789...William Kendrick	1831...Thomas Dickinson
1790...Thomas Farmer	1832...James Russell
1791...Rev. John Simpson Rutter	1833...Charles Windle
1792...James Adams	1834...Charles Forster Cotterill.

Mayors Elected under the "Municipal Reform Act" of 1835.

DAY OF ELECTION, THE 9TH NOVEMBER.

1835, Nov...	Charles Forster Cotterill, who resigned in April, and was succeeded by Richard James, for the remainder of the year.	1844 Nov...	John Hyatt Harvey*
1836 , "	Joseph Cowley	1845 July...	Henry Box, (elected in the room of Mr. Harvey, deceased)
1837 , "	Ditto, (re-elected)	1846 , "	Frederick Thurston
1838 , "	William Dixon	1847 , "	Ditto (re-elected)
1839 , "	John Whitgreave	1848 , "	Samuel Stephens
1840 , "	Ditto (re-elected)	1849 , "	William Harrison
1841 , "	Thomas Oerton	1850 , "	John Shannon
1842 , "	Arthur Adams	1851 , "	Henry Highway
1843 , "	Howard Fletcher	1852 , "	Samuel Lowe
		1853 , "	Ditto (re-elected)
		1854 , "	Francis B. Oerton
		1855 , "	Ditto (re-elected)

TOWN CLERKS.

1600...	Mark Anthony, Cæsar Galillardillo	1778...	Thomas Hodgkins
1684...	Joseph Gorway	1807...	Joseph Stubbs
1702...	Jonas Slaney	1829...	George Bradnock Stubbs †
1723...	Matthew Stubbs	1834...	Charles Frederick Darwall
1746...	Richard Nevill	1835...	William Cotterill ‡
1758...	Roger Holmes	1848...	Samuel Wilkinson, Jun.

RECORDERS.

1686...	John Byrch, Esq.	—	William Beard, Esq., of Newcastle-under-Lyne, a Welsh Judge
1661...	Edward Byrch, Esq.		
—	Robert Aglionby Slaney, Esq., of Hatton, near Shifnal	1789...	Charles Wallet Willis, Esq. of Erdington, near Birmingham, Barrister-at-Law
1757...	Thomas Gilbert, Esq., of Colton, near Cheadle		

* Mr. Harvey was found drowned in Hatherton Lake, in the summer of 1845—vide page 56.

+ The body corporate passed a unanimous vote of thanks to this gentleman on his retirement from office, and presented him with a massive gold box, on which was inscribed:—"Presented to George Bradnock Stubbs, Esq., by the members of the corporation of Walsall, (from a private subscription) as a mark of their high respect for his services as Town Clerk, 1835."

‡ W. Cotterill was also the first Coroner for the Borough; an office established under the Municipal Reform Act. He was succeeded by the present Coroner, A. A. Fletcher, Esq. Surgeon.

1794...Nathaniel Gooding Clarke,
Esq., K. C., Brown's
Green, Handsworth.

1833...Nathaniel Richard Clarke,
Esq., Serjeant-at-Law,
the present Recorder,
and Judge of the County
Court.

GRAND STAND, ON THE RACE COURSE.

LEASE OF THE ROAD AND LAND.

The lease of the road and land—containing one hundred and sixty five square yards, and granted by Lord Bradford, at the nominal yearly rental of one shilling—was for a term of ninety-nine years, commencing 25th March, 1809. It appears, however, by the annexed deed, not to have been perfected until after the erection of the building.

“THIS INDENTURE, made the 7th day of October, in the year of our Lord 1811, between the Right Hon. Orlando, Lord Bradford, Baron Bradford, of Bradford, in the county of Salop, of the one part, and Henry Crocket, of Little Onn Hall, in the county of Stafford, Esq., Nathaniel Gooding Clarke, of Handsworth, in the said county of Stafford, Esq., John Walhouse, of Atherton, in the said county of Stafford, Esq., John Clements Whateley, of Birch-hills, in the parish of Walsall, in the said county of Stafford, Esq., James Adams, gentleman, John Stubbs, banker, John Vaughan Barber, gentleman, all of Walsall aforesaid, and Joseph Stubbs, of the parish of Handsworth aforesaid, gentleman, of the other part. Whereas the said Henry Crocket, Nathaniel Gooding Clarke, John Walhouse, John Clements Whateley, James Adams, John Stubbs, John Vaughan Barber, and Joseph Stubbs, together with divers other persons, by subscription, at their joint expense, have erected and completed, upon the piece or parcel of land intended to be hereby demised, a certain building, or stand for the accommodation of the company attending the horse races, which are accustomed to be holden at Walsall, in the county of Stafford; and whereas the said Orlando Lord Bradford hath consented and agreed to grant a lease of the said piece or parcel of land, and building, to the said Henry Crocket, &c., &c., &c.—The lease is signed and sealed.

BRADFORD.

In the presence of BEILBY LAWLEY, of Middleton Park, Tamworth, and HENRY BOWMAN, of Knockin Hall, near Oswestry, Shropshire.

WALSALL PATROLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF PROPERTY.

In the winter of 1811, it was found necessary to establish a patrole. The parish was divided into six districts, in each of which was provided a watch house. The expense of firing, lanterns, rattles, staves, &c. was defrayed by the constable out of the poor's

rate. Every inhabitant was bound to keep watch in his turn, or find a substitute; and the patrole for the night were obliged to assemble at the Guild-hall, previous to taking their respective districts, by half-past ten o'clock.

In the printed code of regulations, for the guidance of the patrole in the performance of their duty, appear these,

"THE WATCH is to be set by the constable, and their power is as follows:—Every stranger passing by them shall be arrested till morning, and if he does not appear to be a suspicious person, he shall be discharged; otherwise, he shall be delivered to the sherriff, who shall keep him till he is duly acquitted; and where any person will not obey the arrest, he shall be followed with hue and cry by all the town, and the towns near; and so hue and cry shall be made from town to town, until he be taken and delivered to the sheriff as aforesaid." 13 Edw. I, st. 2, c. 4.

"If a watchman shall be killed in endeavouring to apprehend a burglar, his executors shall be entitled to £40 reward." 5 Anne 31, s. 2.

Interesting Trial of an Appeal against a Peer's Rate,

AT THE GENERAL QUARTER SESSIONS OF THE PEACE, HELD FOR THE BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF WALSALL, AT THE GUILDHALL, ON THE 10TH JANUARY, 1813; BEFORE JAMES ADAMS, ESQ., MAYOR; N. G. CLARKE, ESQ., RECORDER; CHARLES FORSTER AND SAMUEL WILSON, ESQS., JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

The trial of this appeal took place in consequence of an attempt made by the foreign of Walsall against the borough of Walsall, to rate the inhabitants of the borough for such lands as they occupied as resident payers to the borough. From time immemorial a usage had prevailed in the parish, to rate all persons for what lands they occupied, to the township in which they resided; so that if a person renting land and residing in the borough, and paying for the support of the poor therein, removed into the foreign, and still occupied the same land, he had in like manner to contribute to the support of the poor of the foreign, and *vice versa*.

Some months previous to the trial of appeal, a notice was served on the overseers of the Borough, by the officers of the Foreign, of which the following is a copy:—

"We hereby give you notice not to collect, or interfere in the collection of the poor's rate, or assessment made on any inhabitant, or occupier of lands, houses, tithes, or other property, within or rateable to the foreign of Walsall, in the county of Stafford, such collection or interference by you being con-

try to law. Dated this 30th day of April, one-thousand-eight-hundred and twelve."

JOSEPH HARRISON, *Churchwarden.*

JOHN BRAUN, } *Overseers of the foreign of Walsall.*
JOHN TIMMINS, }

This notice brought forth another, from the churchwardens and overseers of the borough, viz :—

"TO THE PAYERS OF POORE'S RATES, RESIDENT IN THE BOROUGH OF WALSALL."

"Gentlemen,—In consequence of a notice (of which the above is a copy) from the churchwardens and overseers of the foreign of Walsall, delivered to the overseers of the borough of Walsall, you are requested, should any demand be made by any of the above-stated foreign officers, for poor rates, upon you, as a resident occupier in the borough, to refuse payment of such demand: and you are also requested to meet the churchwardens and overseers at the Guildhall, on Friday next, the 8th day of May inst., at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, to take into consideration the most effectual means of preserving those rights which the borough has exercised for time immemorial."

C. H. DARWALL, } *Churchwardens.*
SAMUEL SHARRATT, }

SAMUEL FLETCHER, } *Overseers.*
JOSEPH COTTERILL, }

By order of the churchwardens and overseers,

THOMAS PEARCE, *Vestry Clerk.*

Walsall Borough, 2 May, 1812.

Mr. W. Spurrier of Birmingham, and Mr. C. H. Darwall of Walsall, having been retained as the attorneys, on behalf of the borough residents rated to the foreign; notices of appeal against the rate were given by William Foster and R. M. Fletcher (who had been previously summoned before the magistrates for their poor-rates) as well as by other persons rated. Counsel were also retained on both sides—counsellors Reader and Pearson for the appellants, and Puller and Petitt for the respondents.

The appeals were respite from time to time to suit the convenience of counsel, till the 16 day of January, 1813, when William Foster's appeal was heard, and occupied the court about nine hours.

John Green, the clerk of Bloxwich chapel was the first witness called by the respondents. He endeavoured to point out a distinct line of boundary between the borough and foreign, by which part

of Bridge-street was thrown into the foreign. Witness stated that he had derived his knowledge of the boundary from conversation with the late William Hodgetts, of Bloxwich, but admitted that Hodgetts had never shown him the boundary by going over the ground; that nothing on the subject had ever been committed to writing; that he had never gone (what he termed) the boundary, till the summer of 1812; and further, that he then went according to the verbal information he had received from Hodgetts, and for the purpose of showing the boundary as it appeared on a map or plan produced upon the trial by the respondents.

Other witnesses were also examined, chiefly old men, and though some of them spoke to particular parts being considered the boundary, not one, but the witness Green, pretended to describe the whole; in general, their belief was, that no known line of boundary existed. Edward Stanley, a witness for the foreign, gave evidence quite contradictory to that adduced by Green. He said that he remembered the land in Bridge-street, before the road was made, (part of which was described by Green, as the boundary) and that when he (Stanley) first knew it, there was not any road or line of demarcation in the direction so described.

Several witnesses were called on the part of the appellants, all of whom were unanimous in their declarations, that there was no known line of boundary between the borough and foreign. It was proved that the land in question had been occupied by borough residents, and had uniformly paid to the borough as far back as the levy books could be produced, (which was for the year 1754,) excepting only, that Richard Holmes, during three months of his occupation of the same, resided in the parish of Rushall, and for that time he was rated and paid to the foreign.

After hearing the whole of the evidence, and the argument of counsel on both sides, the court quashed the rate, being of opinion, (as the learned Recorder stated) that the respondents had entirely failed in their attempt to set a line of boundary between the borough and foreign; and although the court considered that the land in question was proved to be locally situated within the foreign, yet, as they considered the custom or practice, which had been acted upon beyond living memory, of persons paying for

whatever they occupied, to the township in which they resided, to have been the agreement or condition made on the division of the parish, under the 12th Charles II. The court held that the parties must be bound by that agreement, or revert to the provisions of the 43rd Elizabeth, and on these grounds the rate was quashed.

The case was subsequently argued in the court of King's Bench, 23 June, 1813, when the order of sessions was reversed; the custom of rating resident occupiers being declared illegal. The question however was not finally settled till the following hearing in 1818.

**"THE KING AGAINST THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF WALSALL
IN THE FIFTY-NINTH YEAR OF GEORGE III."**

(*From Barnsall and Alderson's Law Reports*).

PULLER, in Easter term, (1818) had obtained a rule to show cause why an order of appointment of four persons to be overseers of the parish of Walsall, in the county of Stafford, should not be quashed for insufficiency. It appeared from the affidavits in support of the rule, that the parish of Walsall consisted of two districts, one called the township of the *borough*, and the other the township of the *foreign*, both of which, as far back as the 13 and 14 Charles II., c. 12, had separately maintained their own poor; that they had had separate rates, accounts, and workhouses, and separate appointments of overseers, constable, and headborough; that there had been parish indentures, executed by the officers of the foreign, so far back as 1689; certificates of settlements given by the borough to the foreign, as far back as 1700; and orders of removal from the borough to the foreign, and *vice versa*, and appeals thereon, as far back as 1744, and as late as 1815. The affidavits on the other side, stated that prior to the statute already quoted, the parish of Walsall received the benefit of the 43 Eliz., c. 2, and that the poor of the borough and foreign were maintained by a general rate over the whole parish; that on the passing of the said statute, it was agreed that the borough and foreign should separate in the maintenance of their poor, and that separate overseers should be appointed, upon condition, that the rateable

property in the parish, whether situate in the borough or the foreign, should be rated to the relief of the poor of that district, in which the occupier resided. They also stated, that both townships had been incorporated by the name of the *borough* and *foreign* of Walsall, and that the jurisdiction of the magistrates extended over the whole parish; that there was but one parish church for both, which was repaired by a joint rate; that a rate of one shilling in the pound, averaged in the borough 125*l.*, and in the foreign 400*l.*; that in the last year, there were thirty-two rates in the former, and eleven in the latter;* and that the parish now could have the benefit of the 43 Eliz., by the joint maintenance of their poor; that by so doing, a considerable expense would be saved, and the poor would be more comfortably provided for. It appeared that on a previous appeal against the poor's rate for the borough, argued in the court of King's Bench, in 1818, the latter part of the agreement, stated in the affidavits, was held to be invalid; and it was in consequence of this, that the joint appointment of overseers for the whole parish now in question, was made.

Jervis and W. E. Taunton showed cause.—“The statement in the affidavits in support of this rule, which is admitted to be correct, viz., that separate overseers, rates, &c., have existed since the 13 and 14 Charles II., both in the borough and the foreign, is not decisive of the present question, for those existed in the case of *Rex v. Palmer*, and in *Lane v. Cobham*, and yet the court sustained an appointment of overseers for the whole parish, and refused a mandamus to appoint separate overseers for the different districts. It is not stated, in any of those affidavits, that the parish cannot now reap the benefit of the statute of Eliz., and the affidavits on the other side distinctly state that the parish can do so. And it appears, from the facts admitted on both sides, that the parish, during the interval between the 43 Eliz. and 13 and 14 Charles II., did reap the benefit of the former statute, by maintaining their poor jointly. [Bayley,—‘There is the fallacy of the argument, the parish, during that interval, did reap some, but not the full benefit of the statute.’] Supposing, that the agreement stated,

* It should be remembered that property at this period was rated at about two-thirds its annual value.

affords evidence of the inconvenience felt by the joint maintenance of the poor at that time, still, that does not fall within the definition given by Buller, in *Rex v. Horton*,—for he there says, “What is meant by the benefit of the statute of Eliz. is, that the parish may maintain its own poor as a parish; for unless it can do so as such, it cannot have the benefit of the statute.” Now, that has been done, in this case, by the parish of Walsall. In *Rex v. Newell*, it was held, that where two districts contributed in certain proportions, each to the maintenance of the poor in the other, and had immemorially made separate rates, still they were not entitled to maintain their poor separately. The principle of that case applies to the present, for here, by the agreement, the property in each district, has contributed to the relief of the poor in the other; and it can make no difference whether the proportions were fixed, as in *Rex v. Newell*, or fluctuating, as in the present case.”

Marryat and Puller, *contrà* were stopped by the court. LORD CHIEF JUSTICE ABBOT.—“The court is now called upon to unite two townships, which, as far back as human memory can go, have been in all respects separate and distinct, and, indeed, the documentary evidence stated in the affidavits carries the separation back for a century and a half. Every circumstance that could possibly exist to show that these were distinct townships for all purposes is found in the present case. The fair result of the whole evidence is this, that at the time of the passing of the 13 and 14 Charles II., two distinct opinions were entertained by the inhabitants of this parish. The first of which was, that they could not reap the benefit of the 43 Eliz.; and the second, that property should be rated to the poor in the township where the occupier resided. On the latter point, their opinion has changed, and they think that the property ought now to be rated according to the rules of law. But this does not show that they were wrong in the former opinion, that the parish could not reap the benefit of 43 Eliz., for the two parts of the agreement are perfectly distinct. I think, therefore, that this case furnishes satisfactory evidence, that the parish could not, and cannot reap the benefit of the statute, and that this appointment of overseers for the whole parish is bad.”

BAYLEY—"I am of the same opinion. The court ought not, except on the plainest grounds, to disturb a practice which has prevailed for so long a series of years. The case of *Rex v. Palmer* only decided that where a parish has, with the consent of all its districts, re-united itself; that re-union is valid in law. But this is an attempt to recede from the agreement to separate without the consent of both parties. The meaning of the words "benefit of the statute of 43 Eliz." is "the full and ordinary benefit of that statute," and if a parish cannot receive that full and ordinary benefit, it comes within the stat. 13 and 14 Charles II. Now where, in point of fact, a parish has long been separated, and has had separate overseers, &c., that is surely very strong evidence to show that it could not originally derive the full and ordinary benefit of the 43 Eliz. As to the agreement, I fully concur with my Lord Chief Justice, that it consists of two distinct parts, and that any alteration as to one part will not effect the other. I think, therefore, that this rule should be made absolute." Rule absolute.

THE OLD MARKET-HOUSE AND CROSS.

The first market-house in Walsall, of which there is any record, was erected 31 Elizabeth (1588). This was taken down and rebuilt by the corporation, in 1691, in the mayoralty of John Perks. It occupied a space at the head of High-street, extending from the premises of Mr. Dutton, watch and clock manufacturer, to those of Mr. Overton, grocer. Here stood the old MARKET CROSS, and not on the site lately occupied by the small market-house erected in 1809; as line 14, on page 16, might possibly lead the reader to suppose.

THE CORPORATION SEAL.

The original Latin inscription on the Corporation Seal, described in page 10, is "SGM MAIORIS & COMMUNITATIS VILLE DNI REGIS DE WALSALE." i.e.—"Sigillum Majoris et communitatis villa domini regis de Walsall." The literal translation of which is, "The seal of the Mayor and Commonalty of the town of our Lord the King (or Royal Town) of Walsall, and not borough and foreign as it has been more frequently translated.

APPENDIX TO "ESCAPE OF CHARLES II."

The following additional details of this adventure, have been collected from one of Pepy's manuscripts, entitled "An account of

his Majesty's escape from Worcester, dictated by the king himself;" and an interesting little narrative, published in the year of the Restoration, under the title of "Boscobel."

"Major Careless told me (Charles) that it would be very dangerous for me either to stop in the house,* or to go into the wood, there being a great wood hard by Boscobel; that he knew but one way how to pass the next day, and that was, to get up into a great oak, in a pretty plain place, where we might see round about us, for the enemy would certainly search at the wood, for people that had made their escape. Of which proposition I approving, we (that is to say Careless and I) went, and carried up with us some victuals, viz., bread, cheese, and small beer, and nothing else, and got up into a great oak, that had been lopt three or four hundred years before, and being grown out again very bushy and thick, could not be seen through, and here we stood all the day; I having in the mean time sent PENDERELL's brother to MR. PITCHCROFT (Whitgreave), to know whether my Lord Wilmot was there or no, and had word brought me by him at night, that my Lord *was* there; that there was a very secure hiding hole in Mr. Pitchcroft's house; and that he desired me to come thither to him. That night RICHARD PENDERELL and I went to Mr. Pitchcroft's, about six or seven miles off."†

When the king was at Pitchcroft's, it devolved upon WILLIAM PENDERELL to shave his Majesty; on which occasion, he also cropped his hair as short as the scissors would shear it, taking care, however, to leave just sufficient length about the ears, to render him as much like a roundhead as possible, and in accordance with the fashion of the humbler classes in the county. The king enjoined his trusty subject to burn the locks, lest a discovery should ensue; but William, (with a singular degree of foresight), instead of obeying this mandate, buried the hair, and when the good time came round, (as recorded by Blount), "with parts of it

* The house here referred to was called the "White Ladies," about three quarters of a mile from Boscobel, and belonged to one Fitzherbert. The king was conducted hither by CHARLES GIFFORD, Esq., (a person of note, to whom he was recommended by the Earl of Derby, who afterwards paid the penalty of his loyalty with his life), and one FRANCIS YATES, (a follower of the Squire Giffard), who acted as guide. Yates was brother-in-law to the Penderells, of whom there were six brothers, who all appear to have been more or less privy to the king's concealment, but chiefly RICHARD and WILLIAM. The former was known by the name of "Trusty Richard." Some of the brothers were afterwards taken into the royal service. HUMPHREY, (described as a miller, and who lent the king, when at "White Ladies," his hat, "which was turned up on all sides"), was footman to the queen, at Somerset House, in the year 1680.

† Charles, afterwards, when jocosely "fighting his battles o'er again," among his gay companions, used to say that the rustling of Richard's calve-skin breeches, was the best guide for him during that dark night's walk.

he pleased some persons of honour." By all accounts, William had many applicants, but however numerous were his customers, he always managed by some means or other to have a sufficient stock to satisfy the demand. The royal hair, like the "Wizard's Bottle," was inexhaustible, being no sooner cut than it grew again. No doubt the "Great Wizard of the North" would be able to throw some light upon this mystery.

From the numerous engravings of Richard and William Penderell, noticed by Granger, under the head of "Persons remarkable for a single circumstance in their lives," it would appear that they were very popular characters, and well known in London. Richard died there, and was interred in the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where a monument—bearing the annexed inscription, and singularly bombastic verse—was erected to his memory:—

"Here lieth the body of RICHARD PENDERELL, preserver and conductor to his sacred Majesty KING CHARLES of Great Britain, after his escape from WORCESTER FIGHT, in the year 1651; who died February 8, 1671."

"Hold, passenger, here's shrouded in this herse,
Unparalleled Pend'rell, thro' the universe;
Like when the Eastern Star from Heaven gave light
To three lost kings, so he in such dark night,
To Britain's Monarch, lost by adverse war,
On earth appeared, a second Eastern Star—
A Pole astern, in her rebellious main,
A Pilot to her ROYAL SOVEREIGN.
Now to triumph in Heaven's eternal sphere,
He's hence advanced for his just steerage here;
Whilst Albion's Chronicle with matchless fame,
Embalms the story of GREAT PEND'RELL'S NAME."

THE
PUBLIC CHARITIES
OF THE
BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF WALSALL.

PART V.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

THE PUBLIC CHARITIES of the borough and foreign of Walsall have, for a series of years, formed a subject of dispute, litigation, and inquiry. So far back as the 11th., James I., there was an inquisition under a commission of charitable uses; another in the 22nd., Charles II.; another in 1726 and 1823; and the recent one, in June, 1855.

The usual formula on such occasions, have been duly gone through—commissioners' opinions have been given and received—misappropriations proved—new schemes for better management proposed and assented to—and verdicts of “guilty” or not “guilty” pronounced—but here, matters have been allowed to rest. The public knew, perhaps, that such investigations were in operation, and may, now and then, have heard a whisper as to the progress of proceedings, and the nature of certain measures being enacted, but this comprised the full extent of their knowledge. True, the several investigations may have been duly printed and published, but how? In authorized versions, called “Blue books,” to obtain a peep into which, was in truth, a very “blue look out,” and even if successful in the attempt, enough to make one intensely blue to wade through their gigantic and intricate pages.

Now these "Blue books" are all very well in their way, but they are not accessible to the public generally, and if they were, it would become essential to their utility that they should undergo a condensing and sifting process, so as to present in simple form, and at a small cost, the really valuable matter they might be found to contain, and as nothing should be kept secret which ought to be made known, the object of the writer is, to lay plainly before the public a faithful statement of facts elicited under the *recent inquiry* before the *Government Inspector of Charities*; facts, not a few of which will be found to exhibit maladministration, misdoings, shortcomings, and reckless squanderings, shocking to contemplate. Happily, a repetition of those evils is now completely prevented by the "Charitable Trusts' Act of 1853," which removes from trustees the power of applying, or otherwise dealing with, any charity property without the previous sanction of the Commissioners.

In order that the position of the Charities, previous to, and at the time of the recent inquiry, might be better understood, it was thought expedient to submit a digest of the evidence adduced on former inquiries, especially that in 1823. By such course the public will be enabled to judge how far former discoveries and decisions have met with due observance and attention, and whether a little more vigilance on the part of trustees might not have preserved the existence of charities now irretrievably lost.

The first mention found of the public taking up the cudgels with respect to the charitable bequests of the town, is in 1804, when a committee was appointed by the parish to inquire into the various public charities, and take such steps as might appear most likely to perpetuate the several trusts to posterity. This investigation was in due time made, and a report thereon issued, in which, amongst the rest, the corporation was charged with holding adversely several valuable estates at Bascotte, Long Itchington, &c., &c., which had been originally left for charitable uses, and belonged to the parish. This led to much agitation, and subsequently to the "Commission of Inquiry in 1823," when the points at issue were decided in favour of the corporation.

The first practical step towards the institution of the RECENT INQUIRY, was taken by the Board of Guardians of the Union, on

the 11th November, 1853, when the following memorial was forwarded to the Charity Commissioners.

"Memorial of the Guardians of the poor of the several parishes in the Walsall Union, to the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, sheweth—that your memorialists elected by ratepayers, having reason to complain of the general management of certain charity estates belonging to several parishes of the union, respectfully request that you will be pleased to require the trustees of the *Fishley*, and the other charity estates, to render to your Board, accounts and statements in writing, in relation to that charity and of the funds, property, and income, as well as the application thereof.

That you will also be pleased to authorize one of your inspectors to make, and take, all due examination personally of the said trustees, and their officers relating thereto.

That your Board will further be pleased to inquire what vacancies exist in the trusteeship of that and other charity trusts of the said town, and your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

Signed and sealed with the common seal this 11th day of Nov., 1853.

Here follow the signatures—

John Whitgreave, Chairman. John Shannon, Samuel Stephens, Robert Westwood, William Hanbury, Elias Crapper, Elijah Stanley,	}	Guardians.
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At a subsequent meeting of the Board, on the 9th December, a committee was appointed to inquire into and report upon the *Walsall Charity Estates*, and on the 27th June, 1854, the following letter and report were forwarded to the Charity Commissioners:—

"The Guardians solicit the Charity Commissioners to make a full inquiry into the receipts and application of the funds of all the charity property within the Walsall Union, and to cause all vacancies of trustees to be filled up, so as to prevent, if possible, the apparent mis-management evidently existing in some of the charities of the town of Walsall.

Adverting to that part of your letter requiring the names of the charities and grounds of complaint as to each charity, the Board of Guardians, in send-

ing the report of the Committee, hope that the information and complaints now sent, may be deemed sufficient to authorize a general inquiry. They would have given a better supply of particulars, but for obstacles they have had to contend with—for instance, as relating to the the Hinton's, the Parker's, and the Stone's charities. On making application to the secretary of the trustees for information, he declined giving any, without the express assent of all the trustees belonging to those charities. The Committee have, therefore, sent the best they could procure."

REPORT.

REPORT AND COMPLAINTS OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF GUARDIANS OF THE WALSALL UNION, TOUCHING THE SEVERAL CHARITY ESTATES BELONGING TO WALSALL.

"FISHLEY CHARITY.—That applications, when made to the trustees, are delayed so long, that masters intending to take poor boys as apprentices, have at last given up all hopes of having an indenture made. That some of the masters have not had the promised premium paid, although it has been many times applied for. That only one indenture has been made, instead of having duplicated indentures (one to keep and the other for the master) consequently when a dispute between master and boy has arisen, the secretary had to attend before the Justices to prove the execution of the indenture, and so charge the costs to the master or to the Trust estate. That the principal part of the trustees are dissatisfied with the management, and with an inquiry to be made by the Commissioners. That the accounts are said to be kept by one trustee, John Burton, Esq., M.D., of Walsall, who appears to have the whole management, and as no accounts are published, the public are also much dissatisfied. That the secretary, Joseph Green James, is said to be residing in Birmingham, and has not had any abode in or near Walsall for some years past. The income was in the year 1835, 44*l.* 10*s.*, and it is believed that it is now more. The funds ought to be applied in equal moieties to the binding of poor boys of the borough and foreign of Walsall, but no boy we believe, has been bound out for the borough township for many years. It is reported, and believed, that the secretary, Mr. J. G. James, has received some portion of the income, of which no account is given.

RICHARD STONE'S CHARITY.—The same trustees have this estate in their care, but there is no account rendered of the income or distribution. The sum of £2 6*s.* is to be given in coats to the poor from the funds of this charity, paid by Lord Anson for that purpose. There is (it is supposed) other property belonging to this charity.

BENTLEY HAY ESTATE.—This estate is vested in the same trustees as the Fishley, and similar complaints exist in this, as in that charity. In the year 1835, the income appears to have been £20 per annum, but it may be greatly augmented by the mines being leased, if placed in the hands of competent trustees. The lands are numbered 693, 692, 695, 795, 796 and 673, contain-

ing about 8*a.* 2*r.* 2*p.*, also a house, and two pieces of land, near the old lane at Bloxwich, and Woodhall field, and Lander's croft. The total rent is £26 per year. We recommend investigation specially in this charity.

WOOLLASTON'S CHARITY.—The funds of this charity are applicable to the binding of poor boys as apprentices belonging to the borough of Walsall, but it is extremely desirable under the act of 16 and 17 Vic., c. 137, that the funds should be made also applicable to the binding of poor boys of the foreign of Walsall which is in the same parish, as there is now, and generally has been, a greater fund than is required for the poor boys of the borough township.

HARPER'S CHARITY.—In this charity it appears from the Vicar's statement, that the property is capable of bestowing enlarged benefits upon the poor, if power be given to authorize it. The donor requires trustees to be appointed, but we believe there are none. The vicar has acted as one—some, if not all of the land, is let and sub-let, by which the charity has not the whole benefit of the income. We recommend the appointment of trustees, as none are living. Fifty years ago, the income was £42 15*s.* 6*d.*

JOHN PARKER'S CHARITY.—The donor requires specific trustees, but the churchwardens take upon themselves to manage the charity, and therefore trustees ought to be properly appointed. The income is about £30, arising from land in the manor of Langthorne, in Yorkshire.

JOHN PERSHOUSE'S CHARITY.—The vicar and churchwardens were appointed the trustees by the donor, but they know nothing of it. The Charity Commissioners' Report, describes the property as houses, near the churchyard, at the top of the church steps, (since taken down), and a sum of 40*s.* yearly, payable out of a close in Walsall Park, one half to the borough, and one half to the foreign. This requires investigation.

HUMPHREY PERSHOUSE'S CHARITY.—Humphrey Pershouse left to the vicar and churchwardens £5 per year, but they are not in receipt of the money. Colonel Walhouse succeeded Pershouse, and Lord Hatherton succeeded Colonel Walhouse, so probably the income is payable by Lord Hatherton for this charity. It is very desirable that a full inquiry be made.

CURTEY'S CHARITY.—The trustee of this charity is the vicar. According to report, it appears that 13*s.* 4*d.* on Good Friday, and 13*s.* 4*d.* on Christmas eve, should be given to the poor of the borough of Walsall, out of land No. 1150, 1153, 1149, in the parish plan. The vicar knows nothing of it.

WILLIAM PARKER'S CHARITY.—We believe that £20 a year to the minister of Great Bloxwich is paid by the Merchants Tailors' Company to teach boys in the school at Bloxwich.

KING'S CHARITY.—The trustees are the minister and churchwardens of Bloxwich. The land is Long Coxtalls, 2*a.* 2*r.* 23*p.*, No. 743, left to be distributed in charity. The mines under the land are being worked out. The late William Cotterell, Town Clerk of Walsall, sold the land to Mr. McBryde, but we are not aware how Mr. Cotterell possessed the mines. This charity re-

quires immediate investigation, particularly as to Mr. Cotterell's right to sell.

ANONYMOUS CHARITY.—The sum of £2 11s., paid by Mr. William Jones, but no account of it arises, or what land, and we cannot ascertain particulars.

HENRY WHATELEY'S CHARITY.—The trustees are the vicar and churchwardens—£4 4s. to the poor, not paupers; £1 1s. to the minister for a sermon; 15s. to the vicar and wardens. The income is charged on land at Coalpool.

ROBINSON'S CHARITY.—No tidings—appears lost.

REDWARE'S CHARITY.—No trace of this—appears lost.

MURRAY'S CHARITY.—No trace.

WHITTINGHAM'S CHARITY.—The Corporation are trustees for a portion of this charity, but for the remainder, there are no trustees. It is necessary for the preservation of part of this charity, that trustees be appointed.

ROBERT PARKER'S CHARITY.—The funds arising from this charity are such as to require the strictest investigation. The mines were let upon lease, and upwards of £1,200 have been paid by the lessee to different individuals; the first of which is an amount of £60 paid to Mr. John James, of Walsall, for the royalty, or rent of the mines; but we cannot ascertain what has been done with the money. Mr. G. B. Stubbs, the present secretary, is able to give a satisfactory account of the management during the time he has acted as secretary. The former secretary was Mr. Joseph Green James, before mentioned.

HINTON'S CHARITY.—The only surviving trustee of this charity is an aged, infirm gentleman, residing at Leamington, in Warwickshire, Mr. John V. Barber. There should be an appointment of trustees to see to the proper distribution of this charity. In the year 1819, the income was £23 18s. 11d., arising out of property at Rickerscote, Mr. Mason, of Walsall, is secretary.

HENRY STONE'S CHARITY.—The income of this charity was originally £34 14s., but we cannot ascertain that anything like this amount is given, according to the intention of the donor.

BRIDGET MILLS'S CHARITY.—The donor appointed as trustees, the vicar and churchwardens of Walsall. They have received within the last six months, the principal, which was vested on the tolls of the Walsall district of the turnpike roads, and we are not aware whether it has been re-invested. We think this should be ascertained.

In the report of the Charity Commissioners in the year 1823, it is stated that the vicar of Walsall is a trustee of the under-mentioned charities, but he knows nothing whatever of any of them, nor can we learn anything concerning them.

SHAWE'S CHARITY.—The vicar and mayor appear to be the trustees, and the land consisting of 7a. 2r. 39p. belongs to the estate, but the rent would now be considerably more than the sum said to have been received, in fact, ten times as much as the 40s. a year given away to the poor. We recommend this especially to the Commissioners for inquiry.

DEE'S CHARITY.—It appears by the report of the Charity Commissioners, that the income arises from land at Woodend, but for which there are no trustees—the vicar states that he knows nothing about the charity. The constable says that he received last year, 18s., and gave it to the poor, fourpence to each individual. We recommend an inquiry into this charity, and the appointment of trustees.

WILCOX'S CHARITY.—We find that the land was sold by the churchwardens, about seven or eight years ago, to Messrs. Addenbrooke, for £150., and the mines have been worked; but the vicar, who is one of the trustees, cannot afford any information as to the proceeds of the sale of the land, nor is it known who holds the scrips or certificate. We think this requires investigation.

HAWLE'S CHARITY.—The trustees are the churchwardens and the vicar. The property is mentioned in the Charity Commissioners' Report as situated at Woodend, Walsall. Joseph Shaw, Ball's-hills, Walsall, now receives £10 a year, part of which he says is expended in bread, which he gives to the poor. Most searching inquiry should be made into this charity.

ORGANISTS' CHARITY.—The income is £5 a year, paid by the Merchant Tailors' Company, London, and the vicar informs us that the organist himself receives that sum regularly from the company.

FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—The Governors are Henry Windle, Richard Jesson, Henry Brace, F. A. Edwards, Howard Fletcher, Charles Turner, Horatio Barnett, S. Lowe, P. P. Pratt, William Brooks and others. The income, according to report of the Charity Commissioners in 1823, is £778.

WHEATE'S CHARITY.—Trustees of this charity should be appointed. The property, as reported by the Commissioners, consists of land, on the plan, No. 1675 and 1676, and contains 2A. 3R. 23P. The tenant was, lately, Frederick Bedworth; the rent then was £8 per annum, which was given to preach four sermons a year, but the vicar has not had it, and knows nothing about it. The Donor requires trustees to be appointed, namely, the mayor and others."

The scheme suggested by the Inspector in the course of his inquiry, viz., to consolidate the whole of the charities under one body of trustees, appeared to meet with universal approval. The views of the town council on the subject are sufficiently explained in the annexed resolution, passed at a subsequent meeting of that body on the 31st July, (1855).

"The Inspector of Charities having at the public investigation so lately made into the Walsall Charities, intimated that he should suggest an entirely new scheme with respect to their future management and administration, and also a new body of trustees; and Mr. Hare also having stated his desire to receive suggestions from the council as to the appropriation of the improved income; and there being strong reasons why the business should be

proceeded with as speedily as possible.—Resolved, that this council is of opinion that the objects of the Charities will be greatly promoted by the whole of them being consolidated under the management of one body of trustees; that it is on many accounts of great public importance that the members of the Town Council should form part of the new body of trustees; their responsibility to the public being much more direct and complete than that of a trustee, who is not elective; that the improved income could not be more usefully and beneficially employed than in the support of an entirely new school, on a wide and general principal, that would make it open to all classes, without distinction of party."

In course of time the heads of a proposed scheme (of which the following is a copy) were forwarded by the Inspector of the several trustees of the various charities:—

**"HEADS OF A PROPOSED SCHEME FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHARITIES
OF THE BOROUGH AND PARISH OF WALSALL.**

"1.—All the estates and property of the following Charities to be vested in a newly-constituted body, to be called the '*General Charities' Trustees*' The *Blue Coat Charity and National School*, and *Whittingham's, Taylor's, Oerton's, Curtis's, and Crump's Gifts* thereto; *Fowler's Charity*; *Molesley's Almshouses and Pensions*; *the Fishley Charity*; *William Parker's Charity*; *Blanche Woollaston's Charity*; *Harper's Almshouses*; *Webb's Charity*; *Syvern's Charity*; *Bentley Hay Charity*; *Wilcoz's Charity*; *Hinton's Charity*; *Henry Stone the elder's and Henry Stone the younger's Charities*; *John Parker's Charity*; *Robert Parker's several Charities and Benefactions*; *Anonymous Charity, or rent charges on Jones's farm, Little Bloxwich*; *Havle's Charity*; *Nicholas Parker's Charity*; *Robinson's Charity*; *Wheate's Charity*; *Curtey's Charity*; *Richard Stone's Charity, of Caldmore*; *King's Charity*; *Bridget Mills's Charity*; *Gorway's Charity*; *Dee's Charity*; *Whateley's Charity*.

- 2.—Six to be a quorum, and the acts of the majority to be binding.
- 3.—General Charities' Trustees to appoint a clerk, receiver, and banker.
- 4.—The General Charities' Trustees to make general rules for transacting business.

5.—General Charities' Trustees, subject to the approbation of the Board, to appoint the manner of investment of the stock belonging to the charities.

6.—A committee to be appointed as trustees of Roger Hinton's estates, with the trustees for the other town's interests.

7.—Application of portion of the Charity funds in specific payments, according to the trust. *Dee's* and *Gorway's Charities*, and £5 of *Blanche Woollaston's*, to be distributed amongst the poor people in the almshouses, and £2 of *Richard Stone's* to be given in clothing to the poor people in the same almshouses.

8, 9, 10.—The *Fishley* and *Blanche Woollaston's Charities* to be distributed in apprentice fees, premiums, or prizes of from £2 to £5 each to children of

Walsall parents, not under 13 years of age, who shall have been two years at school, and 176 days in the preceding year, certified to be of good character, and selected upon examination, nearly in the same manner as Ironmasters' prizes are distributed.

11.—Webb's, Mills's, Syvern's, Wilcox's, and the Bentley Hay Charities, to be distributed by the trustees for the benefit of the poor of the borough, and so far as not otherwise declared by the trusts, in aid of the means for their education.

12.—Whateley's and the anonymous donor's charities to be distributed for the benefit of the poor of the foreign in like manner.

13.—Hinton's, Stone's, (the three) and Hawle's Charities to be distributed for the benefit of the poor of the entire parish in like manner.

14.—Molesley's (or the corporation) Almshouses, to be occupied by widows nominated by the mayor.

15.—Harper's Almshouses to be occupied by persons nominated by the vicar.

16.—The General Charities' Trustees to frame rules for the government of the almshouses, subject to the approbation of the Board.

17.—Power to let any part of the estate or site of Harper's almshouses on building leases, and to erect the almshouses elsewhere.

18.—To pay the income of Fowler's Charity to the special trustees recently appointed thereof.

19.—To pay the income of the benefactions for the Blue Coat School to the treasurer of that school for the time being.

20.—The Corporation to pay annually £57 4s. Od. out of the Bascote Estate to the General Charities' Trustees for the inmates of Molesley's Almshouses, and to keep the buildings in repair, and these payments to be a discharge of all claim on the Bascote Estate for any charitable use.

21.—The General Charities' Trustees, in the first instance, to be composed as follows:—

The mayor and vicar of Walsall for the time being, Edward Adams, Henry Brace, Thomas Pool Brettell, John Burton, Michael Cozens, Joseph Cowley, Frederick Atcherley Edwards, Howard Fletcher, John Freeth, Isaac Highway, Richard Jesson, Samuel Lowe, John Woodward Newman, F. B. Oerton, John Shannon, William Somerfield, Edward Elijah Stanley, Henry Stanley, Samuel Stephens, George Bradnock Stubbs, Frek. Thurstan, H. C. Windle, and the Incumbents of Bloxwich, St. Peter's, Walsall, and St. John's, Walsall Wood, and the Incumbent of any other district church which may be hereafter formed in or from the borough or foreign, or antient parish of Walsall.

22.—Upon a vacancy occurring in the non-official members, the body to be filled up by one to be chosen by the Corporation, and by one chosen by the remaining Trustees alternately; but the non-official trustees not hereafter to be more than eighteen in number.

23.—Power to vary the scheme, if necessary, on future occasions.

24.—Construction of the scheme in case of difficulty by the board."

A special meeting of the Town Council, for the purpose of taking into consideration the above scheme, was held on the 23rd Nov., 1855, when the mayor read his observations thereon, as follows:—

" As to clause 3, clerk and receiver may be the same person; and if an attorney be appointed, he shall not be permitted to institute any legal proceedings without the authority of a general meeting, the summons to convene which shall contain notice of such intended proceedings. As to clause 8, 9, 10, so little good seems to result from the apprentice fees, that I think they had better be abolished altogether, and the funds applied either in establishing a new school, or in extension of the various educational establishments already in existence; applying so much as might be considered necessary to comply with original intention of the donor in putting out poor apprentices, but in some other way than the payment of a fee to the master. As to clause 11, same reply as to No. 10. It is the business of the Guardians of the poor to relieve the destitute, and not the trustees. As to clause 12, same as No. 11. As to clause 13, same as No. 11. But if the principle indicated in Nos. 11, 12, and 13 must be carried out, the scheme itself should define (without leaving it to the trustees), some mode of selecting the objects that should most effectually prevent all private favouritism. As to clause 21, the appointment of so many clergy of the church of England, to the exclusion of those of every other denomination, is manifestly most unjust, particularly in one special case—that of the Unitarian Charity, which exceeds in amount several of the others put together. The only way to avoid sectarian animosities would be to exclude all except the vicar and the incumbent of Bloxwich, who are already officially connected with many of the charities. If this part of the scheme be persisted in, it will give rise to such strong dissatisfaction as to peril the whole. I am a member of the church of England myself, but I cannot shut my eyes to the unfairness of this proposal. Practically, it would be to hand over the management of the charities to the four or five clergy named, which number will be increased as the town extends, and new churches are erected, the sites of two new ones being at the present time selected."

The council then unanimously passed this resolution:—

" That the mayor having read the 'Heads of Scheme' for the future management of the Walsall charities, and also his observations thereon, and the correspondence with Mr. Hare, the charity inspector—resolved, that this council hereby approves the observations and answers of the mayor, and requests him to return the 'Heads of Scheme,' with such answers; and that as to the persons who are to be new trustees, this council adheres to its former resolution, further consideration having only strengthened the conviction of the council that the members of the Town Council for the time being will be

the most fitting persons to be such trustees, they being directly responsible to the public for all their acts, and their meetings being open to the public; their accounts being annually published, and the election of one-third their number taking place annually; and with reference to the fear of Mr. Hare, that Parliament will not adopt that policy, on account of its supposed hostility to the policy of the Municipal Act, this Council is of opinion, that as Parliament removed Charity Properties from the control of Municipal Corporations at a period antecedent to which such Corporations were self-elective, the adoption of a different policy, after many years of popular election, would substantially be no reversal of that policy; and the Council has a strong hope that its view of this part of the 'scheme' will be impressed on Parliament by the Members for the Borough and County, and receive much greater support than Mr. Hare anticipates."

The advantage of consolidating the charities under one managing body of trustees, few, if any, will attempt to question. It appears also most proper that the Town Council, for the time being, should form, at all events, part of that body; but the injustice of appointing clergymen of one particular denomination to the exclusion of all others, must be apparent to every reasonable and unprejudiced mind; and (as the mayor has very justly observed), "if this part of the scheme be persisted in, it will give rise to such strong dissatisfaction, as to peril the whole." With respect, however, to the proposed appropriation of the charity funds to the "establishment of a new school,"—as expressed by the first resolution passed by the council,—to say the least, seems to embody an extremely dangerous experiment. The want not only of a school, but also (as before argued in these pages) many other useful institutions, based upon such principles, is evidently much felt, and should, as far as practicable, be established; but, notwithstanding this, it behoves the promoters to pause well, ere they adopt a precedent that may have an injurious influence on future beneficence; for, although in many cases it may be found impolitic, or perhaps impossible, to carry out strictly the expressed wishes of the donor, yet, it is the bounden duty of trustees to see that the original intention of the testator is supported, so far as the customs and privileges of the times in which they live will admit. The exercise of extreme caution is therefore requisite, before various sums, left by divers persons, for sundry charitable purposes, are withdrawn from several objects, and appropriated to one, perhaps of an entirely different character.

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The poor are equally entitled to the charitable legacies bequeathed to them, as the lords of the manor are to any inheritance they may enjoy, and it is neither honest, consistent, or politic, (leaving feeling altogether out of the question), to strip the aged, the needy, and the infirm, of their just and legal rights, in order to advance any object, however good or beneficial in its nature. It is therefore contended, that trustees of such legacies, (for example those specified in clauses 11, 12. and 13 of scheme), are bound by every tie of honour, and humanity, to distribute wholly, and fairly, to the various legatees their several bequests, and that it is quite as much their business so to relieve the destitute, as it is that of the guardians of the poor.

It may perhaps appear singular that this "preliminary chapter" to the "Inquiry into the Charities," should embrace proceedings of a much later date than that of the "preface," the reason is two-fold:—first, the original publisher having failed in the performance of his contract, it was deemed advisable to take advantage of the delay so occasioned; and secondly, this division of the work was kept back till the latest moment, in the hope that some definite scheme for the future management and administration of the charities would have been adopted. This expectation, however, has unfortunately not been realized. The case is in *statu quo*, and how long it will continue in this position, entirely depends upon the amount of philanthropy, sincerity, and vigilance, possessed by the champions of the poor, on the one hand; and the punctilious requirements of RED-TAPE, ROUTINE, AND Co., on the other.

RECENT INQUIRY

BEFORE THOMAS HARE, ESQ., GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR OF CHARITIES, 1855,
COMPARED WITH THE FORMER INQUISITION, A.D. 1823.

PART VI.

A GOVERNMENT inquiry into the charities within the Walsall Union was opened on Tuesday, the 19th June, 1855, before Thomas Hare, Esq., Government Inspector of Charities, in the Mayor's parlour, Guildhall, Walsall. There was a large and influential attendance on the occasion—F. B. Oerton, Esq., Mayor; Samuel Wilkinson, Esq., Town Clerk; W. Ward, Esq., and other members of the council were present. The Rev. J. H. Sharwood, vicar of Walsall, ex-officio trustee of several charities; the Rev. H. Bagnall, perpetual curate of Great Barr, also a trustee; and a deputation from the Ratepayers' Protection Society, likewise attended.

The investigation was instituted in consequence of the report made by the Board of Guardians into the alleged misappropriation of the funds left for charitable purposes, and which had been brought before the Charity Board. The Inspector intimated to the meeting that he would take the several parishes in such order as would first relieve the trustees from the most distant places.

Mr. Joseph Green James, solicitor to the trustees of several of the charities, said, that he attended to afford the Inspector any aid in his power. The Rev. J. H. Sharwood, R. Jesson and G. B. Stubbs, Esqrs., solicitors of Walsall, were also present, for the same purpose.

The first day's proceedings opened with an inquiry into charities at Pelsall. Messrs. Charles and Wm. Russell, the chapelwardens,

gave an account of the manner in which the several endowed charities in that township were disposed of, which appeared to be in small sums of sixpence, and a shilling, to each person. In one case, out of the proceeds of *Mrs. Bridgman's bequest*, 6*l.* annually were paid for teaching eight boys, at the National school—the clergyman received 3*l.*, and the poor, 10*s.*

The Inspector suggested that more good would be done if the churchwardens would make these gifts indirectly auxilliary to education, by giving them in larger sums of 5*s.* or upwards, as premiums, to those parents among the poor who were most attentive to sending their children to school and keeping them there. The neglect of this duty was one of the things most to be regretted in the present day, and he should be glad to see all these endowments assist in promoting its fulfilment.

Mr. Russell approved of this system, and said they would adopt it.

Evidence was given by F. C. Mottram, Esq., churchwarden of Great Barr, and the Rev. H. Bagnall, which proved that there were several charitable bequests at Great Barr which appear to have been altogether lost sight of. One in particular, the Custom Money, had been received within the recollection of the oldest families in the parish, but had not been distributed for many years, and the source of the fund was not known.

The Rev. Horace Chavasse, incumbent of Rushall, also gave evidence as to some charities there. It appeared that one in particular, to which reference is made in ancient reports, was not now in existence, nor did there appear to be the least chance of its being discovered. Mr. S. Wilkinson, town clerk, here observed, that the fact of such charities being neglected, and ultimately lost, was accounted for by the annual change of trustees and churchwardens; trusteeship should, in his opinion, be established on a more permanent basis.

Robert Scott, Esq., of Stourbridge, and formerly M.P. for Walsall, and Mr. Moseley, master of the Free School, Great Barr, were examined as to property which should belong to that school. The former said, that he was sole trustee of two charity properties, in one of which he was the representative of the founder, Thomas Addye. This charity originally provided for the free education of 13 boys,

but at the present time 20 received gratuitous instruction. A rent of 53*l.* 7*s.* was derivable from lands, and there was a house for the master, a school room, and two cottages which were let at 3*s.* 9*d.* per week. The master was allowed the privilege of taking other pupils who paid from 4*s.* to 12*s.* per quarter. Mrs. Scott had left, a sum of 400*l.*, the interest of which, amounting to 20*l.*, was expended in clothing for the boys belonging to the school, and also for four poor women. The Inspector observed, that it would be well to appoint trustees to those charities. Mr. Scott acquiesced in this opinion so far as regarded the latter charity, but his impression with reference to the "Addye Charity" was, that it was the intention of the donor to leave the nomination of the master, and the scholars, in the hands of the owner of the property. Evidence having been given with respect to some chapel lands in the same parish, the Inspector then proceeded to those charities which immediately appertained to the borough and foreign of Walsall, commencing with

JOHN HAWLE'S CHARITY.

By will, dated 18th April, 1618, John Hawle, of Caldmore, gave some lands (then under lease) called Molefields to feoffees; the rent, amounting to 4*l.* a year, to be employed in the purchase of twenty-eight penny loaves of white bread to be distributed in the church of Walsall every Sabbath day after morning prayer, viz. to poor people, 25; to the vicar, 2; and to the clerk, 1.

The Rev. J. H. Sharwood, stated in evidence, that thirty-nine loaves of bread were given away every Sunday after morning service, and that, in his opinion, the mode of administering the charity was most objectionable. They were sometimes distributed by the churchwardens, and sometimes by the beadle, who, he believed, participated, amongst others, in the distribution. In answer to an observation that the dispensing of this charity was confined to the vicar and churchwardens, the Rev. gentleman said, he was not aware that it was in any way under his control. He thought the money would be much better applied to increase the funds of the almshouses.

By the inquisition in 1823, it appeared that the land called Mole-fields consisted of 18*a.* 2*r.* 12*p.*, and was divided into four closes. It was purchased in 1814 by one Samuel Wood, from Thomas

Hawe Parker, subject to the payment of 5*l.* per annum, payable half yearly, for the purposes before stated in John Hawle's will. At the time Mr. Wood purchased the land he was tenant at the yearly rent of 38*l.* Besides the purchase money, Mr. Wood paid between 60*l.* and 70*l.* for timber.

In a report, made A.D. 1804 by a committee of inhabitants appointed at a vestry meeting to inquire into the public charities of the town, it was stated "that widow Thurston, baker, delivered twenty-eight loaves every sabbath day to the church, and was paid for the same by the Rev. Charles Blackham, 2*l.* 16*s.* every half year. Mr. Blackham was then the tenant of the land, and after he gave it up, only 5*l.* appeared to have been distributed for some years."

A short time previous to the sale of the land to Mr. Wood, Thomas Hawe Parker gave directions to his agent that double the quantity of bread should be given away. Thus, from this time, 10*l.* was distributed yearly, 5*l.* being paid on account of Mrs. Parker while she lived, and 5*l.* by Mr. Wood, as a charge upon the land so purchased by him. After Mrs. Parker's death the payment was continued by her son-in-law, but this was considered by the Commissioners as voluntary.

The most important question at issue with respect to this charity was, whether 4*l.* a year (the original sum left by John Hawle) was the whole amount claimable, that sum being at the time of the bequest, the entire rental of the land, which has been proved to be now worth 60*l.* annually.

It was stated that the point had been referred to the Attorney-General, and that he was inquiring into the matter.

The inspector expressed his approval of the course adopted, and appeared to concur fully in the opinion given by the Commissioners in their inquiry in 1823, which was as follows:—

"On referring to the terms of the original instrument, it appears questionable whether the whole rents and profits of the land were not intended by the donor to be distributed in bread weekly; and it may be a fit question for a court of equity to decide, whether such a construction ought not to be adopted."

[Why was this opinion, given in 1823, allowed to lie dormant till 1855? Echo answers, why?]

HARPER'S ALMSHOUSES

were next taken under consideration. Previous, however, to submitting the report, it may be as well to make the reader acquainted with the HISTORY of the Charity, according to the *Commission of Inquiry in 1823*,—a course which the author has deemed it prudent to adopt with reference to the charities generally.

By an inquisition, taken at Walsall 7th December; 11th James I, under a commission of charitable uses, it was found that John Harper, son and heir of William Harper, Esquire, established an almshouse in Walsall, for four poor people to dwell in; and by a certain indenture, bearing date 20th December, 11th Henry VIII, he granted two acres, and a half, of arable land, in Windmill Field, and a croft in Caldmore, for their maintenance. He further willed that the poor folks should be named by the vicar, with the consent of the lord of the manor of Rushall, "and of the mayor of Walsall." The vicar to receive the rent, and pay the same to the poor folks yearly; the rents to be applied when necessary to the repairs of the almshouse. He further directed that when all the feoffees, except three, should die, the survivors should make the estate over to other persons appointed by the lord of Rushall, and the vicar of Walsall, (the copy of the deed adds "with the advice of the mayor of Walsall"), and so from time to time for ever. It was further found that George Hawe, on the 27th October, 1557, made his will, whereby he gave to the said almshouse, a close at Walsall Town's-end, and that the rents of the said close were then of the value of 26s. 8d. yearly.

By the parish report of 1804, it appears that the trust was vested in the heir of William Leigh, Esquire, of Rushall, but the receipt and application of the rents were then, and had been for many years previous, exclusively in the hands of the vicar of the parish of Walsall.

It is stated on one of the benefaction tables that Mr William Ridware gave 2s. a-year to the poor of the almshouse, to be paid on Good Friday, out of a pasture in Essington, called Priest's Croft; but no trace of this payment could be found, nor the particular land ascertained.

Another inscription specifies a further sum of 2s. per year, given by Thomas Wollaston to the four people in the almshouse, out of

the rent of a house in the churchyard. On this bequest the Commissioners of Inquiry, in 1823, gave the following opinion :—

" We are not aware of the reasons which induced the Committee of 1804 to believe that the house in the churchyard, occupied by Sarah Birt, and for which she paid rent to Mr. Thomas Adams, was the house given by John Wollaston for the poor. The situation, indeed, answers the description ; and the circumstance of a rent now 4*s.* and then 8*s.* being paid in respect of this tenement to the almshouse poor, may have led to the belief that the property was the same. We cannot, however, obtain evidence that the house occupied by Sarah Birt ever belonged to either of the Wollastons. We have seen the title deeds of the present proprietor, Mr. William Proffit, from which it clearly appears that from at least the year 1740, this tenement was conveyed and treated as private property, and has passed, together with two tenements adjoining, through the hands of successive purchasers to the present possessor ; and it further appears that these three tenements were held together as one property so early as the year 1681. There is no mention in the deeds of any payment thereout."

About the year 1793, the old almshouses, which appeared to have consisted of only two dwellings, were taken down by the direction of Mr. Rutter, the then vicar, and the present houses were built in their room, consisting of six dwellings of one apartment each. They are under one roof, four being in front towards the street, on the ground floor, and two behind, where the ground falls and admits of one being placed under the other. It appears that the old houses were built of common limestone, and that the timber was extremely decayed, insomuch that they where unfit to be inhabited. The cost of the present buildings, exclusive of the old materials, which were used as far as practicable, was 87*l.* This was paid by Mr. Rutter, but from what fund it is not known.

The property derived from Harper, is returned in the Commissioner's report alluded to in 1823, as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
1.—The almshouses situate in Dudley Street, containing six tenements, and a small yard adjoining.			
2.—A garden adjoining the above, containing 12 perches, in the occupation of Mr. Thomas Oerton, as yearly tenant, at a rent of 0 16 0			
3.—A garden on the south side of No. 2, and separated from it by a footpath, containing 11 perches, occupied by Mr. Samuel Barber, together with No. 5, at a rent of 0 16 0			
Carried Forward 1 12 0			

	Brought Forward	£	s.	d.
4.—A garden adjoining No. 3 on the east, containing 5 perches, and lying open on the western side to garden ground of Miss Touse, held by her at the rent of	1 12 0			
5.—A garden adjoining No. 4 on the south, and No. 2 on the east, containing 5 perches, lying open on the west, to land of Samuel Barber, who holds it, together with No 3 as above mentioned.	0 5 0			
6.—Garden ground and yard, containing 8 perches, lying open on the north, to land of Thomas Tomlinson, who pays for it per annum	0 10 6			
7.—Garden, in what was formerly called Windmill Field, con- taining 24 perches, let to Thomas Oerton, at per annum ...	1 1 0			
8.—Garden, ditto, containing 17 perches, let to William Hill at...	0 18 0			
9 & 10.—Two gardens, in ditto, containing respectively 10 and 12 perches, let to Josiah Meeson at	1 1 0			
11.—Land, in ditte, now called Peg's Piece, containing 1a. 29p., numbered in the map of the foreign 1,449, let to William Porter at...	4 0 0			
12.—Land near Maw Green, containing according to the map of the foreign 4a. 2r. 26p., let to Thomas Oerton for ...	12 0 0			
The close at Walsall Town's-end, given by George Hawe, con- tains 1a. 1r. 15p., and is occupied by the Birmingham Canal Company, partly for a wharf, at a rent of ...	21 0 0			
There is also paid by Mr. William Proffit to this charity an annual sum of 8s., in respect of a small house, situated at the top of the steps leading into the churchyard on the left or northern side, and which is now occupied by him with other premises, his property adjoining thereto	0 8 0			
	£ 42 15 6			

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

The Vicar produced a book which was handed to him by his predecessor, identifying the property. It appeared that one piece of land belonging to this charity was let to the Canal Company, for which was paid a rental of 21*l.* per annum. Mr. H. Archer, parish clerk, gave evidence with regard to six gardens under the same charity, for which he collected the rents, and at present in the possession of the following:—F. B. Oerton (the mayor), Adams, Tomlinson, Thacker, Broadhurst, and Archer.

The Mayor stated that only five of the gardens could be accounted for, whereas there ought to be nine. According to documents in his possession, six were clearly established. The three missing contained thirty-nine perches. He thought the property was capable of being made much more valuable, and if let for building would produce a considerably enlarged income. The nett rent received for land and gardens amounted to only 40*l.* 18*s.* 2*d.*; the income not having increased for forty years. He further remarked that no trustees had been appointed since the year 1726, and that the property had been in consequence greatly neglected; that the council were in ignorance of the existence of the charities, and were of opinion that there should be a more efficient body of trustees appointed.

The Inspector replied, that it came within the power of the Board to submit schemes to Parliament, and to remodel charity trusts in a manner beyond the powers of the Court of Chancery, but suited to the wants of the day. He would, after the inquiry was completed, cause a scheme to be preferred and laid before the Board, which he trusted would effect all the objects which the corporation and the inhabitants had in view, and render the charities much more beneficial to the town.

It was believed that the front of the land in Bath Street, on which the almshouses stand, would let most profitably on building leases; and also, that it was highly necessary that another site more suitable and commodious should be provided, the present building (which comprises six tenements, each containing a single apartment) being considered most unwholesome. It was here observed that the inmates,—six old women of the parish, generally widows,—were chosen by the vicar, whose duty it was to select them from a class of persons somewhat above the merest paupers, but that this attempt to raise the class of recipients, had in some measure been prevented by the confined and unhealthy character of the present dwellings; that some of the aged almspeople received a quarterly allowance of 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, which almost exhausted the income of the charity; and that the expenses of attendance and repairs were simply made by private assistance.

The Mayor then drew attention to a piece of land adjoining the

almshouses, (and formerly used as a drying ground for the inmates), which had been enclosed by the proprietor of the White Swan, Dudley Street, thus depriving the almspeople of the yard. For this encroachment it appeared no license was ever obtained, and no acknowledgement or rent had ever been paid. He (the mayor) had, however, been informed that the present owner of the "White Swan" was perfectly willing to admit that this land in question formerly belonged to the charity, and to hold the same under the trustees.

Mr. Edward Tomlinson was examined about a garden which he formerly rented, belonging to the almshouse charity, and the situation of which it was difficult now to determine. Mr. Tomlinson, stated that it was at the back of Dudley Street, adjoining where he formerly resided, and for which he paid 10*s.* 6*d.* per annum.

It was shown by an order of the "Commissioners of Charitable Inquiry," on the 17th May, 1726, that Edward Leigh, of Bushall, who was found to be the heir of William Leigh, surviving trustee of the land, should convey the trust to Walter Gough and four others, they being the assignees to the property belonging to the almshouses; but it did not seem that this conveyance had ever been made. It was also proved by the report of the parish in 1804, that the Rev. W. Leigh was then the heir-at-law, but there was no evidence of any steps having been since taken to get in the legal estate.

The property of this charity was now disposed of as follows:—

1.—The land at Town's-end, given by George Hawe, and containing 1a. 1r. 15 <i>p.</i> , and occupied by the Birmingham Canal Company at a rental of	£	s.	d.
2.—Three lots let to Mr. Oerton, for...	...	12	3 0
3.—Land occupied by Broadhurst and Aubin	...	1	18 0
4.—A piece of land let to Mr. William Wood	...	3	17 8
5.—Ditto ditto William Adams, (deceased) and underlet to Mr. MacInalty	...	0	16 0
6.—A garden in the occupation of Mr. Tomlinson...	...	0	13 6
7.—Ditto ditto Mr. Jackson	...	0	5 0
8.—A payment from Mr. Henry Highway, who had purchased the houses which looked out on the churchyard, and one house at the top of the church steps, leading into the churchyard on the left, or northern side. This sum is paid yearly as an acknowledgement for the right of way	...	0	8 0
Total income	£	40	18 2

The Inspector, on this point, said, that it was very difficult to conceive how an acknowledgement should come to be made to the charity, which had no interest in the adjacent property. The Commissioners, in their inquiry of 1823, seem to have been satisfied that the charity had no claim on the houses, in respect to which the rental was paid. He further stated as his opinion, that the property of the charity was susceptible of great improvement, and that much of it would be taken as a site for building, if any power existed to deal with it; but as it stood, the persons in possession had been allowed to occupy it without any increase of rent, and without any steps having been taken to preserve the property from encroachment, or to ascertain its boundaries.

BLANCH WOLLASTON'S CHARITY.

Blanch Wollaston, by will, dated 30th January, 1676, gave and devised to her son Thomas Wollaston, and his assignees, certain lands in Great Barr; and also a tenement in Hall Lane, then lately assigned to her for the remainder of a term of 950 years, together with all the profit and benefit of her personal estate; and the testatrix directed that the executors should, after the death of her said son, hold the land in Great Barr, for the uses following, namely:—10*s.* of the rents to be yearly bestowed on twenty poor widows of the borough of Walsall, equally, and the residue to be annually applied to apprenticing poor boys and girls; and she further declared, that all her personal estate, goods, and chattels, before bequeathed to her son Thomas, should after his death be disposed of in the purchase of land, the rents and profit of which, to be applied to the like charitable purposes; 5*l.* yearly to be distributed amongst the poor of the parish of Church Bicknell, in the county of Warwick, and the residue, in placing out poor boys and girls of the borough of Walsall, apprentices; and she appointed William Pearson and Clement Wall executors, and James Orton and Samuel Adey supervisors.

By indenture, dated 27th June, 10 William III, between Mary and Anne Pearson, co-heiresses-at-law of William Pearson, the executor above named, of the first part, and Mary Pearson, widow and representative of the said William Pearson, of the second part, and Richard Palmer and others, of the third part; recites amongst

other matters, the death of the testatrix, and also that of Clement Wall, and that the whole of the personal estate devised to Thomas Wollaston, came into the hands of William Pearson, who received the rents of the lands in Great Barr, &c., since the decease of Blanch, "the said Thomas Wollaston been then lately dead, and standing in no need thereof during his life." The indenture further witnessed, that the said executors purchased for 171*l.* 2*s.*, certain closes, called West Brook Fields, in the parish of Aldridge, the rents and profits thereof to be disposed of according to the true intent of the said will, viz.:—5*l.* to the poor of Church Bicknell, and the residue in putting out apprentices in the borough of Walsall. And also that the said co-heireses and representative of William Pearson, had sold to Richard Palmer and others, the lands at Great Barr, to hold the same upon trust, yearly to distribute 10*s.* to twenty poor widows of the borough of Walsall; and also the tenement in Hall-lane, for the remainder of the term 950 years, the rent and profit of which, to be added to the apprenticeship fund.

The following are the trust premises, and returns thereof, as described in the *Commissioners' report*, in 1823:—

	£	s.	d.
No. 1.—Five closes called Eaves Hayes, let from year to year, considered at its full value,—some good timber on this land.	28	0	0
,, 2.—First allotment on Great Barr Common, let yearly	... 2	0	0
,, 3.—Second ditto, (both high rents) let yearly ...	... 2	0	0
,, 4.—West Brook Field* ...	... 20	0	0
,, 5.—This parcel not identified.			
,, 6.—The Druid Heath allotment, let on lease for twenty-one years, from 1806,—full value	... 2 10	0	0
,, 7.—House in Hall-lane, let yearly	... 8	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£ 62	10	0

Commissioners' report, and opinion, thereon:—

"Of these rents, 5*l.* is annually distributed, on St. Thomas's Day, to poor housekeepers of Church Bicknell.

"4*l.* is given to forty poor widows, of Walsall borough, in sums of 2*s.* each.

"The residue—after deducting expense of the meetings of trustees, varying from 4*l.* to 8*l.*, occasional repairs of the house in

* The rent had been reduced from £28, Lady-day, 1822.

Hall-lane, and also on the farms, and an annual sum of 3*l.* 10*s.* to the secretary, for salary, stamps, &c.—is set apart for apprenticing poor children of the borough of Walsall.

“At the meeting of the trustees, the affairs of several other charities, of which they have the management, are transacted, but they are chiefly small charities, and the bulk of the expense is charged to this fund.

“The children are selected from amongst the poor, by the vestry clerk. They are first sent, to the place designed for them, on trial, for a month or six weeks, and if the parties approve of each other, they are submitted for the magistrates sanction, upon whose approbation they are bound out; the girls till twenty-one, or marriage, and the boys till twenty-one, according to the Act of Parliament for parish apprentices.

“The premiums given, have varied in the last ten years, from 1*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.*, and only in one instance 5*l.* was given. The number bound out in the last ten years, was sixty-nine boys, and five girls, with premiums amounting in the whole to 174*l.* 10*s.* The expense of the indentures is paid out of the premiums.

“The balance in hands, at the annual settlement in May, 1822, was 281*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* The bankers (Messrs. Barber and Marshall) allow four per cent. interest, which is annually added to the charity. In 1804, there was no balance in hands, nor any regular book accounts; there is now one for the entry of orders and regulations, and another for accounts, which are audited yearly by the trustees.

“The only account we could obtain of the receipts and disbursements of the charity, previous to 1804, was a statement purporting to be the receipt and disbursement of the charity, by William Pearson, for fourteen years, namely, from 1740, to 1758, inclusive. During this period, the rent is stated to be 15*l.* per year, producing in the whole, 210*l.*; timber cut down, 42*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*; total, 252*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* The disbursements in the same period being 255*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*, leaving a balance of 3*l.* 0*s.* 2*d.* due to the accountant.

“If the trustees were to select children to be bound out voluntarily, and not as parish apprentices, there is no doubt this charity might be more extensively and beneficially administered.”

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

G. B. Stubbs, Esq., solicitor to the trustees, was first called on to give evidence. He laid certain deeds before the Inspector, with reference to a bequest, under will bearing date 1676, from Blanch Wollaston, of property called the "Wollaston Estate," and said that he had been unable to find the will of Mrs. Wollaston, but produced a bond, executed twenty years after the will, and remarked that it might be inferred from that document, that the bequest was purely intended for boys and girls of the borough, the words being "in the borough of Walsall." A condition of the bond was, that the funds should be expended in "putting out, and placing, poor boys and girls of the town of Walsall." This bond was dated the 11th of May, 1697. That the trustees of the real estate were J. B. Adams, J. V. Barber, Arthur Adams, Charles Adams, Rupert Adams, H. Box, F. A. Edwards, J. Beddoe, and Philip Perks Pratt; and that when the trustees were reduced to three, fresh ones were appointed. In 1818, new trustees were selected, and others were added in 1846. According to the existing scheme, it had been found impossible to find a sufficient number of objects, on whom to expend the income 65*l.*, and consequently a balance had been constantly accumulating. Many years since, a large amount of this surplus had been lost, by the bankruptcy of Messrs. Barber and Marshall, the bankers in whose hands the fund was deposited. In June, 1851, a sum of 255*l.* were invested in the funds, and the interest arising from this had raised the income to 73*l.* A further balance of about 100*l.*, were now lying in the Walsall Bank.

Mr. Mason, secretary to the estate, was next examined. He said that the expenditure, so far as it had gone, had been applied annually to the relief of the poor of Church Bicknell, and to poor widows of Walsall borough, the former receiving 5*l.*, and the latter 4*l.* These sums were distributed, the former by the churchwardens of Church Bicknell, and the latter by the trustees, to the most deserving persons, chiefly necessitous widows, of whom forty, in Walsall, received an allowance of 2*s.* each.

The Inspector observed that, according to the will, it appeared that a sum of 10*s.* only, should be divided amongst *twenty* poor widows.

Mr. Stubbs here explained, that the increase from 10*s.* to 4*l.*, was in consequence of the property having increased in value, and the trustees were very careful in distributing it to those most deserving.

The Inspector said that, in his opinion, the increased fund might be disposed of more advantageously, by dividing the funds, as originally intended by the donor, amongst *twenty* only. The overplus to be devoted to schools, for the education of the poorer classes.

Another bequest, under the same will, was for placing out children as apprentices.

Mr. Stubbs here remarked, that the deed specified, that "this bequest was for the benefit of those residing in the borough only, not for the foreign." A specific sum was given for each apprentice, but the amount varied from 1*l.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* Nine boys had been put out as apprentices from May, 1854, to May, 1855. The total amount of premiums given was 19*l.* The lowest in any single instance was 1*l.*, and the highest 3*l.* 10*s.* In most instances the money was for the purpose of providing clothes, and other requisites for the apprentices; but in some cases it was for the father who wished to apprentice his son, and possessed not the means of so doing. The trustees, in all cases, freed themselves of responsibility.

The Inspector replied, that the funds were badly distributed, and suggested the propriety of establishing schools, for the education of the young. He would wish to know, from Mr. Stubbs, if all the boys, to whom premiums were given, had actually been apprenticed.

Mr. Stubbs answered in the affirmative, having himself attested the execution of the indentures.

ROBERT PARKER'S CHARITY, (No. 1).
Commission of Inquiry, in 1823.

Robert Parker, by will dated 10th January, 19th James I., (1624), bequeathed to the master, wardens, and assistants, of the MERCHANT TAILORS' Company, in London,* 400*l.*, to be expended

* The MERCHANT TAILORS' Company, anciently styled "Taylors and Armourers," was incorporated in 1466, by Edward IV. This Company was re-incorporated by Henry VIII, (who was a member thereof), in 1503, under the name of "The Master and Wardens of the

in the purchase of land and tenements, to pay 20*l.* annually to the poor of the parish of Walsall, and all the villages and towns thereto belonging, to be distributed for ever, at Christmas, in the manner following:—to Great Bloxwich, the sum of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*; to Little Bloxwich, Goscott, Harden, Colepool, Rushall, Daw-end, Pelsall, Shelfield, Wood-end, and Caldmore, the like sum of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*; and the same amount to the poor of Walsall town. He also directed that the minister and churchwardens of the several places, and the overseers for the time being, should have a “conscientious care” that this money was given in accordance with his will.†

It does not appear, however, that any lands had been purchased with the legacy; but the sum of 20*l.*, as the interest thereof, was annually received by the vestry clerk, from the Merchant Tailors' Company, and paid over to the churchwardens for the borough, who disposed of it in connection with the gift of John Parker.

About the year 1820, the churchwardens of the foreign, conceiving that Bloxwich, and the hamlets in the foreign, did not receive their due proportion of these charities,—claimed from the

Merchant Tailors, of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist, in the city of London.” More royal and noble personages have been enrolled in this than any other City Guild, many kings and noblemen having received the freedom of the Merchant Tailors. Among the distinguished members of this Company, Sir John Hawkwood, a native of Sible Hedingham, Essex, shines conspicuously. He was apprenticed to a tailor, in London, but before his servitude expired, he was impressed for a soldier, and sent to France, where he displayed so much gallantry, under Edward III, especially at the battle of Poictiers, that he was promoted from the ranks to a captaincy, and received the honour of knighthood. On the peace of 1360, this brave knight became a leader of one of those bands of military adventurers called “Late Comers.” Barnabus, the brother of the Duke of Milan, then at war with Mentua, invited Sir John Hawkwood to his assistance, and he achieved such distinction by his prowess, that Barnabus bestowed upon him his daughter in marriage, with a munificent estate. Subsequently, Sir John aided Pope Gregory XII., in recovering the revolted Cities of Provence, a service for which he was rewarded with the governorship of four towns. He next attached himself to the Florentine army, and dying in 1394, “after infinite victories obtained, and an incomparable renown amongst all men,” was buried with high honours in the great Church of Santa Croce, at Florence, and a monument was raised to his memory by order of the Senate. Sir Richard Blackwell, a fellow apprentice with Sir John Hawkwood, and a member of the Merchant Tailors' Company, was also a gallant commander, and knighted for his services by Edward III. This Company expends more than £2,000 annually on charitable purposes. The motto of the Company is “Concordia parva res crescunt.” (Illustrated London, by W. Gaspey—Tallis's Ed., Vol. II., p. 198).

† Rushall, Daw-end, and Pelsall, are here enumerated among the villages and towns belonging to the parish of “Walsall,” in which the testator appears to have been under a mistake. Pelsall is a chapelry in the parish of Wolverhampton, Rushall is a distinct parish, and Daw-end a hamlet in Rushall parish. There is little doubt, however, about Rushall having been a part of the parish of Walsall.

churchwardens of the borough, an increased payment, amounting to 18*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*, calculated upon the principle of giving to Great Bloxwich, one-third of Robert Parker's gift, and one-third of John Parker's, (including in the last item, the four hamlets of Little Bloxwich, Harden, Goscott, and Colepool); and dividing another third, equally among the ten places mentioned in Robert Parker's will, seven of which are hamlets in the foreign; and also a third of the distributable portion of the gift, among the six places, specified in the benefaction table, as entitled to one share of John Parker's charity, four of which are hamlets in the foreign. The churchwardens of the borough admitted the fairness of this claim and allowed it in account, (there being an open account between the officers of the two divisions of the parish), and proposed that such course should be followed in future.

The report states, that the portion of these charities belonging to the poor of the borough, was given away in gowns and chemises to poor old women, principally widows. Forty of each yearly; the persons being selected by the churchwardens, who kept a list of them, making alterations therein, as they might see occasion. The produce of two other charities, Syverne's and Webbe's, was added to the fund for providing this clothing.

The portion assigned to the foreign—after deducting the sum of twenty shillings, which was carried to the churchwardens' accounts for the repairs of the chapel—was distributed among the poor generally, without any particular reference to the shares of the respective hamlets. It was given away, together with other charity money, at one distribution, in the course of the spring, at Bloxwich chapel, or at the workhouse, in sums varying from one to five shillings, according to the merits and necessities of the applicants. Old persons and widows were principally selected.

OPINION OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

"The principle of apportionment may be considered as defective; inasmuch as it gives equal sums to each of these hamlets and towns, without reference to the difference of their population. If any variation can be made upon this consideration, we conceive that it can only be done by consultation among the parish officers of the different places, grounded upon their local knowledge.

"The payments to the different ministers, are made when applied for; but there were, at the time of our examination, some arrears due to each of them, in the hands of the churchwardens. It does not appear that any particular sermons are now preached in respect of these payments.*"

BENEFACTION TO THE ORGANIST. (No. 2).

By said will, (10th January, 1624), Robert Parker bequeathed another sum of 100*l.* to the Merchant Tailors' Company, upon condition that lands and tenements should be purchased, "to pay 4*l.* yearly, at Christmas, to the organ player in Walsall Church, and 20*s.* to his man who bloweth the bellows." This money was not laid out in land, but 5*l.* per annum, as the interest thereof, is paid by the Merchant Tailors' Company, to the organist of the parish church, whose salary is made up by an annual collection at the church.

GIFT TO GREAT BLOXWICH. (No. 3).

Robert Parker, by same will, gave to Great Bloxwich, where he was born, and to the chapel there, one leasow, or pasture of land, called Ley Haye, in Woodhall Field, upon the condition that the poor of Great Bloxwich, old men and women, such as had most need and were past labour, should have twenty shillings every quarter of a year for ever, out of the yearly profits and rents.; the remainder of the rents to be appropriated to repairing the chapel, and keeping the clock thereof in order.

The Commissioners, in their report of 1823, state:—"The Ley Haye consists of five closes, numbered in the map of the foreign, 791, 794, and 804, and stated therein to contain together 13*a.* 3*r.* 34*f.* About a quarter of an acre more is occupied by the Wyrley and Essington Canal, which runs through the land, and for which the Canal Company pay a compensation of 2*l.* a-year to the tenant."

"The land is let by the churchwardens, at the annual rent of 20*l.* for a term of fourteen years, from Lady-day 1820. The tenant had not executed the lease, nor paid any rent, at the time of our examination, but he had promised to do so. The rent appears to be a fair one. The previous tenant held the land at the

* The payments here alluded to, refer to John Parker's charity.

rent of 25*l.*, but he was unable to pay the same. There is also an allotment of land, of about four acres, in Essington Wood, held under the Essington enclosure act, at a yearly rent of 4*l.* 10*s.*"

Recent Inquiry, (June, 1855).

Mr. Joseph Green James, the late legal adviser to the trustees, was first called upon to give evidence in this case, which exhibited misapplication and expenditure of the most reckless and disgraceful character. He said that on the 11th of August, 1838, the churchwardens granted a lease of the charity estate for fourteen years, to James Smallman, at a surface rent of 20*l.*, and a fixed minimum royalty of 120*l.* An information was filed at the relation of Thomas James, and afterwards changed to Edward James, against the churchwardens for the time being—the cause being called "the Attorney-general *v.* Bealey,"—to establish the charity, for the conveyance of the legal estate from the heir-at-law of the surviving trustee, to new trustees, and for a scheme for the administration of the funds accruing from the lease of the mines. In this suit he, (Mr. James), was solicitor for the trustees, and Mr. Hinchcliffe was solicitor for the parish. An application was made for the appointment of receiver, after the answers were in, and the suit, which had now become (if it had not originally been) hostile, a long contest took place in the master's office, on the appointment of a receiver, and subsequently on the choice of trustees. The scheme was also the subject of much contest.

Mr. James, in answer to questions by the Inspector:—"I was solicitor for the receiver, who was four years in office—four accounts were passed. The receiver was discharged in the year 1849. I have no papers. Mr. Parkes was my professional agent, and afterwards Messrs. Fearon and Clabon. I have a letter from Messrs. Fearon and Clabon, dated 11th June, 1855, in which they say 'the receiver was, as you are aware, discharged in the beginning of the year 1849,' (the letter was here produced). The moneys all passed through my hands, from the time the receiver was appointed, and during the progress of the suit. The endorsement (produced) to receiver's fourth year's account, is in my own handwriting. The receiver's salary was 20*l.* per annum. In 1852, I was compelled to take the benefit of the Insolvent Act, and my cash books

and ledgers were given up to the officer. All my papers are now in Birmingham. I applied to the officers for leave to examine the books, but could not do so. I sent a clerk to Birmingham, to look through the papers there for the bill of costs, and he could not find them. After the appointment of trustees, and before the secretary was appointed, the trustees received notice that the South Staffordshire Railway would intersect the land, and I presented a petition against the bill, in order that a better arrangement might be made. It would have stopped access to the canal, and the object was to make a better arrangement with the company. I presented that petition with the authority of the trustees. A bill of costs was incurred by me, of, I think, 68*l.* I did not lead the trustees to believe that the costs would not exceed 5*l.*"

Mr. Stubbs, the new secretary to the charity, was next examined, and stated that he applied to Messrs. Fearon and Clabon, in 1852, as to the funds in court, if any, but received no answer. An order was made in June, 1848, that the receiver should pay into the Bank of England, a certain sum of money, amounting to 240*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.*, on or before July, 1848, and the next accounts, between 25th December, 1847, and 25th December, 1848, amounting to 185*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.*, were also ordered to be paid in, making a total of 425*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* There was *no evidence to show that such order had been complied with.* The payments for royalty and rents from September, 1838, to Lady-day, 1849, were 1,567*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.*

Mr. Wilkinson remarked that the total sum received down to December, 1844, was believed to be, 474*l.* 19*s.* 8*d.*, and the whole amount paid into court by the churchwardens, was 200*l.*

Mr. Eglinton, in his examination, said:—"I was the receiver of this charity; I ceased to hold office in the year 1849; I gave security; my securities were, Mr. H. Hale, builder, Walsall, and Mr. Thomas Edkins, printer, Bridgnorth; I had no order for my discharge; when the new trustees were appointed, I considered my power had ceased; I paid over the balances, from time to time, to Mr. James, as solicitor in the suit; I had no knowledge after that, of what became of the money.

Mr. James, (by the Inspector)—I don't know what was done, I left these matters more to my agent than to myself, if there were such sums received after the date of the order.

Mr. Eglington,—the gross amount I received was 928*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Wilkinson, (who had spent considerable time in endeavouring to trace in the books, entries of monies on account of the charity, but in vain), observed, in answer to a question by Mr. James, that it was quite evident 1,400*l.* had been received from the date of the first lease, nearly 500*l.* of which was unaccounted for, and in his opinion had found its way into private pockets. In the year when the first payment of 60*l.* for the half year's royalty was paid, 58*l.* was given to Mr. Newman, by the then churchwardens, Messrs. James and Pratt, for services said to have been rendered by him, in the course of some legal proceedings, to which the churchwardens were parties, *but which had no reference to the charity.*

Mr. James replied that the subsequent costs should have been paid to him out of the 425*l.* All the money, up to the time of the bill being filed, was applied to parish purposes.

It appeared, from the Inspector's statement, *that the whole of the money paid into court, had been spent in the suit, being no less a sum, than 1,229*l.* 16*s.* 5*d.**

Mr. Joseph Curts, of Walsall, as the agent of Mr. Mellish, pays to the churchwardens of Bloxwich, the sum of twenty shillings yearly, which they carry to the account of the fund distributed in the manner mentioned under John Parker's charity.

From the same source, the constable of the borough, (appointed annually by the Court Leet), receives a further sum of one pound per annum, which he gives away on Good Friday, to sixty widows, in sums of four-pence each.

JOHN PARKER'S CHARITY.

John Parker, by will dated 3rd August, 1620, gave 20*l.* yearly for ever, issuing and payable out of the manor of Langthorne, in Yorkshire, to be distributed as follows:—"10*l.* to be divided within four days before Christmas, and 10*l.* within four days before Easter, among the poorest inhabitants dwelling in Walsall, Rushall, Bloxwich, and Harden, and in other odd houses within the parish of Walsall, to every house, either 5*s.*, or 6*s.* 8*d.*, or 10*s.*, according to the number which should be found to have great need thereof, but in no case less than 5*s.* a-house;" and he devised for the preaching of sixteen sermons, 8*l.* yearly, 10*s.* a-sermon, four in the parish

church of Walsall, four in Rushall, and eight in the chapel of Bloxwich; also 40s. yearly, for repairing and keeping in order the said chapel, and chapel yard, making in all 30*l.* per annum; and he further directed that "three honest men of Walsall, three of Bloxwich, three of Rushall, and one of Harden, should be trustees, to distribute the poor's money, and make choice of the preachers."

By certain codicils to this will, dated 8th August, 1625, and 12th February, 1626, these bequests were reduced to 20*l.* a-year, and a moiety of the number of said yearly sermons, and also a moiety of the poor's distribution, were in proportion abated.

By indenture dated 27th June, 1628, Nicholas Parker, of Bloxwich, in pursuance of the said charitable bequests, and performance of a decree made in Chancery, dated 31st May preceding, between William Chilcott, gentleman, complainant, and the said Nicholas Parker, defendant, (in a suit, instituted among other things, for the establishment of the said charity), granted and confirmed to Henry Stone, and six others, their heirs and assigns, an annuity, or rent charge, of 20*l.*, issuing out of the said manor of Langthorne, to be paid at Lady-day and Michaelmas, in trust, and to be disposed of in such manner as declared by the will of the said John Parker, with power of distress, if the same be unpaid for twenty-eight days.

On an old benefaction table, the distribution of this charity is thus described:—

	£	s.	d.
For four sermons, to be yearly preached in Bloxwich Chapel,			
10 <i>s.</i> a-sermon	2	0	0
For two sermons, in Walsall Church, 10 <i>s.</i> a-sermon	1	0	0
For two ditto, in Rushall Church, 10 <i>s.</i> a-sermon	1	0	0
For the repair of Bloxwich Chapel, yearly	1	6	8
To the poor of Great Bloxwich, Little Bloxwich, Harden, Goscott, and Coalpool... ...	4	17	10
To the poor of Shelfield, Rushall, Daw-end, Wood-end, Caldmoor, Walsall, Towns-end, and other houses in lanes and places in the foreign	4	17	9
To the poor of Walsall borough	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£ 20	0	0

With reference to this division, the Commissioners, in their report of 1823, state:—"It does not appear when, or by what

authority, this specific division among the different townships and hamlets was first ingrafted, on the general directions given by the founder; it has, however, prevailed far many years, and is still observed, nor does it appear to be inconsistent with the founder's intention. The odd houses in the parish, which he mentions among the intended partakers of his bounty, have probably formed the origin of the several hamlets, enumerated in the benefaction table."

By the same report, it appears that the proprietor of the manor deducted 4*l.* for land tax, which reduced the distributable fund to 16*l.* This sum is paid over to the churchwardens for the borough, and carried by them into one account, with another charity given by Robert Parker, making a total of 34*l. 9s.*, thus apportioned:—

		£	s.	d.
UNDER JOHN PARKER'S CHARITY.	To the Vicar of Walsall	0	15	6
	To the Minister of Bloxwich Chapel	1	7	0
	To the Vicar of Rushall	0	14	6
UNDER ROBT. PARKER'S CHARITY.	To the Churchwardens of Pelsall	1	17	0
	To ditto of Rushall	1	11	6
	To ditto of the Foreign of Walsall 14	0	0	0
	To ditto of the Borough	14	0	0
	Stamps and Postage	0	3	6
		<hr/>		
		£ 34	9	0

The Commissioners thought it difficult to conceive upon what principle this apportionment was made, the amount of the sums appropriated to the different places, not appearing to follow any rule suggested by the terms of the founder's wills, especially in the application of so large a portion as 1*l. 17s.*, out of 6*l. 13s. 4d.*, to Pelsall, one out of ten places, among which the sum was to be shared.

It appeared by the "*Recent Inquiry*," that the churchwardens took upon themselves to manage the charity, though the donor, by his will, distinctly requires specific trustees. The Inspector said that new trustees should be appointed, and that he would take notice of it in his intended scheme.

The FISHLEY, BENTLEY HAY, RICHARD STONE'S, and BLUE COAT SCHOOL CHARITIES, are all united under one body of trustees, and were—during the "*Recent Inquiry*"—taken into con-

sideration collectively. It has been deemed advisable, however, before entering upon the investigation, to notice each, in separate order, according to former inquisitions.

THE FISHLEY CHARITY.

By an indenture, dated 21st November, 1657, between Henry Stone, of Walsall, of the first part, John Wollaston and others, of the second, and the mayor and commonalty of the borough and foreign of Walsall, of the third part, it is recited:— “William Parker, citizen, and Merchant Tailor of London, did, by his will, bequeath the sum of 200*l.*, to be employed for a stock, to set the poor on work, within the parish of Walsall.” This amount was left in the hands of the Merchant Tailors’ Company, who had paid the same to some of the parishioners of Walsall. It is further recited, that upon the demolishing of the minister church at Lichfield, the sum of 100*l.* of the money, raised out of the materials thereof, was allotted to the parish of Walsall, for the same, and other uses, and was procured by Sir John Wirley, Knight, and the said Henry Stone, two of the Commissioners for the disposing of the said money; also, that the mayor and commonalty, with the advice of the Commissioners, could not find a better way of setting the poor on work, without diminishing the stock, than by placing out poor children as apprentices, and had determined that the said sums of 200*l.*, and 100*l.*, should be laid out in the purchase of land, and the rents and profits thereof applied to that purpose. It then appears that the said Henry Stone had purchased certain lands with the money, and granted the same to John Wollaston and others, upon trust for ever, the proceeds to be applied as aforesaid, one moiety for the borough, and another for the foreign. It is further shown, that one Richard Francis had surrendered to the said Henry Stone, his heirs and assigns, a close of land in Little Bloxwich, called the “Haunch,” which the said Henry Stone, on the 11th August, 1657, covenanted to surrender to the use of John Wollaston and others, for the like purpose as the freehold premises before granted.

According to the *Report of the Commissioners*, in 1823, the property comprised in this conveyance, consisted of a house, and nine parcels of land, represented on the corporation map to con-

tain, 3*A.* 2*E.* 1*P.*, situate in Little Bloxwich, and Norton, and another piece of 2*A.* 3*E.* 17*P.* in Great Bloxwich, about twenty-seven perches of which were purchased by the Essington Canal Company.

The meadow called the "Haunch," which contained 4*A.* 2*E.* 4*P.*, was exchanged in the year 1800, for another field, containing 4*A.* 3*E.* 13*P.*, which exchange, appears to have proved beneficial to the estate.

The lands in Little Bloxwich and Norton, and let to John and Thomas Cadman, produced a yearly rental of 50*l.*, which was considered beyond the then value of the premises, and it was thought that the rent should be reduced.

The field in Great Bloxwich, was let at 6*l.* per annum, which was also considered an ample rent.

The rents were applied, as far as practicable, in apprenticing poor children, boys and girls of the borough and foreign, but in consequence of the difficulty experienced by the corporation, in procuring eligible masters, there was at the time of the inquiry, (1823), a balance in hands of 265*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.*, besides an arrear of rent, due at Michaelmas, 1822. This balance formed part of the general account of the corporation, with their treasurer, and bankers, Messrs. Forsters, who allowed no interest to the corporation, on the balance of their account, but, if overdrawn, received 5*l.* per cent.

The customary premiums at this time, given with apprentices in the borough, were from 2*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* In the foreign they have invariably been 1*l.* 10*s.* By the indenture, the master was bound to provide the apprentice with board, lodging, and clothing, and at the termination of the apprenticeship, to give him a new suit of clothes.

From the books of the charity, it appeared that in the ten years preceding Lady-day, 1821, there had been put out by the borough, seventy-four apprentices, with premiums amounting to 154*l.*; and by the foreign, one-hundred and thirty-two, with premiums amounting to 202*l.* 5*s.*

OPINION OF THE COMMISSIONEES:—

"We cannot but regret, that a more efficient use has not been made of the funds of this charity. The principal cause of the non-

application of so large a portion, seems to be the very low rate of premiums given, which must be insufficient to procure respectable situations for the apprentices. No reason is assigned for the continued adherence to these small sums, but, that they have been the customary fees, and that an idea appears to have prevailed, that the trustees were not authorised to enlarge them. If the children were not put out as parish apprentices, (which does not appear necessary, as the binding is altogether voluntary), and larger premiums were given, there seems no reason to doubt, from the information we received, that opportunities would easily be found of applying the whole income of the charity, and in a more beneficial manner than the present system can admit of. The truth of this appears to be acknowledged, and we trust that steps will be taken to place the administration of the charity on a better footing."

BENTLEY HAY CHARITY.

According to an indenture, bearing date 23rd April, 1702, between Thomas Price, and Susannah his wife, of the one part, and Martin Pashley, and several others, all of Walsall, of the other part, a suit was pending in the Court of Chancery, between the mayor and commonalty, of the borough and foreign of Walsall, and Thomas Lane, Esq., concerning the payment of 10*l.* per annum, in consideration of their right of common in Bentley Hay, (then in his possession), for the use of the poor of the borough, pursuant to a decree formerly made in the Court of Exchequer; and also that the same had been referred to arbitration, when it was awarded, that the said Thomas Lane should pay to the mayor, &c., of the said borough, the sum of 220*l.*, to be laid out by them, for the use and benefit of the poor, in such manner as should be deemed by them most convenient, which sum was accordingly paid. The corporation agreeing to appropriate 14*l*. 1*s.* 6*d.* of the amount, in the purchase of certain premises, to be conveyed to the aforesaid Martin Pashley, &c., for the purposes stated.

The said Thomas, and Susannah Price, in consideration of this 14*l*. 1*s.* 6*d.*, enfeoffed, by direction of the mayor, &c., to Martin Pashley, &c., and their heirs, certain buildings, orchards, and lands, at Great Bloxwich, and a field, called "Woodhall Field," and other parcels adjoining, together with a croft, called "Lander's

Croft," and all other tenements of the said Thomas, and Susannah Price, in Great Bloxwich, upon trust, that the mayor, &c. should receive the rents and issues thereof, for the charitable uses before mentioned.

By the Commission of Inquiry, in 1823, it would appear that it was not known what had become of the remainder of the 220*l.*, after paying for the purchase of this land. Nothing is found concerning it in the books of the corporation; but, from an entry in one of the parish books, dated 24th November, 1782, it appeared that a workhouse had been erected, for the use of the poor of the borough, and the Commissioners thought it probable, that it may have been applied in this building.

The premises conveyed by the above deed comprised, at the time of this inquiry, only one house, of a very poor description, with a shop, and garden, and two closes adjoining, of about two acres; also a parcel of enclosed land, (about two and a half acres), adjacent to Woodhall Field, but not abutting on the croft (or garden). This land, it was thought, answered to the two acres and three quarters, specified in the deed, as being in Woodhall Field. However, that part of the field, (the whole of which was formerly open land), had been enclosed since the time of the grant. The enclosure therefore could not be identified with the original parcels. There did not appear to be any land belonging to the corporation, called Lander's Croft, but they held a piece containing nearly four acres, the situation of which, answered the description of the land designated in the grant by that name.

In a map and survey of the lands in the foreign of Walsall, made in 1819, the first mentioned premises, viz., the house, shop, and garden, and the two closes adjoining, are numbered respectively as follows:—the garden, 693; one close, 692, containing 1*A.* 35*P.*; and the other close, 695, containing 1*A.* 1*R.* 32*P.*

The second parcels, adjoining to Woodhall Field, consist of two closes, one numbered 795, containing 3*R.* 20*P.*; the other 796, containing 1*A.* 3*R.* The land answering to Lander's Croft is numbered 673, and contains 3*A.* 3*R.* 32*P.** The house, and two pieces

* The latter is situate on the high road at Bloxwich, extending back to Leamore Lane, and now let to Mr. Thomas Adams, on lease of fourteen years, commencing from March, 1844.

of land adjoining, was, at the time of the inquiry (1823), let to Matthew Sommerfield, from year to year, at the rent of 10*l.*

A short time previous to the inquiry alluded to, an enclosure had been made in Bloxwich, under which the corporation had agreed to exchange two acres, (part of the close of two and a half acres by Woodhall Fields), and other lands, with the Earl of Bradford, for some premises in the town of Walsall. The then occupier of the close, Mr. Stokes, was allowed to hold the same without any agreement as to rent, the corporation having suspended making any, in consequence of the contemplated exchange. It was affirmed on the part of the corporation, that they had made the stipulation in ignorance of this being charity land, that they did not know with certainty what lands belonged to this particular charity, till the deed before mentioned was inspected for the purposes of the Commissioners' Inquiry. The land in question, and two crofts, were formerly held by the tenants of the house, who paid for the whole 16*l.* a-year.* The other piece of land, answering to Lander's Croft, is described as having been let to William Richards, at the yearly rent of 10*l.*

From the produce of these rents, gowns of stuff, or cotton, were annually distributed by the corporation to poor widows, or sometimes very old married women of the borough, The mayor for the year, and the mayor for the preceding year, managing the distribution, and selecting the recipients.

In the year 1821, a sum of 36*l.* 3*s.*, was expended in this distribution, of late years it had amounted to about 20*l.* Before the year 1807, the rent amounted to only 9*l.* 10*s.* per annum, and since that time, the corporation had not received the whole of the improved rents, through the insolvency of two of the tenants; and had also laid out within the years 1820, to 1823, between 20*l.* to 30*l.*, in repairs of the cottage.

The Commissioners found, upon careful inspection of the books, that in ten years, from 1812 to 1821, the actual receipts, after

* This exchange was subsequently effected, and on the land so obtained, the house now occupied by Mr. Payne, wine and spirit merchant, High Street, and part of the Pig Market, were erected. The corporation, however, have to pay a rent charge of £15 a-year, by order of the Lord Chancellor, dated 7th February, 1840. This deed was executed 14th August, 1841.

allowing $25l.$ $11s.$ $6d.$ for repairs, amounted to $148l.$ $2s.$ $6d.$, and that the expenditure for gowns during the same period, was $193l.$ $2s.$ $3d.$, exceeding the receipts by $44l.$ $19s.$ $9d.$ A sum of $2l.$ $6s.$, derivable from the following charity, has also been made contributory to the supply of these gowns:—

RICHARD STONE'S CHARITY, (OF WALSALL).

According to an old benefaction table, Richard Stone, of Walsall, gave twenty shillings yearly, out of a close at Bentley, called "Park Brook Leasow," to buy coats at Christide for two poor people, and the like sum of twenty shillings, out of Bentley Leasow, for the like purpose, as well as six shillings yearly, to be spent on "the Mayor and his brethren," when they should meet to see his legacies performed. These sums, amounting in all to $2l.$ $6s.$ per annum, are paid by the proprietors of the Bentley estate, to the mayor of Walsall, or his agents, for these charities.

The Commissioners, in their report of 1823, gave it as their opinion, that there was no specific application of this money, but it was considered as accounted for in the distribution of the clothing under the "Bentley Hay Charity." It did not appear to have been intended by the donor to be confined to the poor of the borough, but as it was in practice combined with the preceding charity, (which was so limited), it was classed under the borough charities.

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL CHARITY.

This charity possesses a permanent income from the following sources, viz:— $10l.$ per annum, paid by the corporation, as interest of $200l.$, given by John Whittingham, in 1723.—By order of the Charity Commissioners, this legacy was, in December, 1854, transferred to the "Municipal Charity Trustees."— $4l.$ $4s.$ per annum, left by John Taylor, being the rent of a piece of land at Queen's Cross, near Dudley; $10l.$ per annum, paid by the corporation, as the interest of $300l.$, left by Mrs. Crump, in 1848; and of $200l.$, left by Mrs. Curtis, in 1849. Also a donation of $50l.$, from Francis Baildon Oerton, Esq., presented on the 31st May, 1854, with instructions that it should be invested in some good security, the interest to be given annually, at Christmas, in equal proportions, to one boy and one girl, who, after due examination in Scripture and general information, (special regard to their moral and general

good conduct being observed), were found to have made the most satisfactory progress during the previous year. The vicar and head master of the grammar school to be the examiners. The principal has been invested in three per cent. consols, and the scrip for the same is held by the vicar. The trustees are, the Rev. J. H. Sharwood, vicar, H. C. Windle, and F. Thurston, Esqrs.

The Recent Inquiry, (1855).

John Burton, Esq., M.D., deposed that the “*Fishley, Bentley Hay, Stone's, and the Blue Coat School Charities,*” were under one body of municipal trustees, of which he was one, and that he was also appointed treasurer, in 1850.

The entire income of the Fishley Charity was 52*l.*, which was expended in apprenticing the children of poor and respectable inhabitants. A premium of 3*l.* was paid with each boy apprenticed; but, as the trustees confined it to in-door apprentices, there was a difficulty in finding boys to whom to grant it, as it was now a very general practice to take out-door apprentices, who received wages rising from a few shillings to about ten, and upwards per week, and this appears to be generally preferred by parents and boys. He, however, objected to the practice, as the boys, by getting wages themselves might leave their parents' control, and the masters undertook no responsibility as to their moral conduct. There was a balance of 78*l.* at the beginning of this year, and he, (Dr. Burton), thought that the present plan did not secure the full amount of benefit it might if otherwise applied. The secretary, Mr. Joseph Green James, received a salary of 15*l.* yearly.

The income of the Bentley Hay Charity was 37*l.* 10*s.*, which was spent in providing winter clothing for old women, but he, (Dr. Burton), feared that imposition was practised, owing to its being distributed by the trustees individually, some persons, it was said, getting two lots of clothes. He thought, if properly administered, this charity would be very useful.

Stone's charity was expended in coats for old men.

F. B. Oerton, Esq., (the mayor), here referred to the remark made by Dr. Burton, with respect to the *Fishley Charity*, “that there was an objection to apprenticing boys to masters who only

took out-door apprentices." He, (the mayor), could say, without fear of contradiction, that the masters who only took out-door apprentices, were, as a rule, far more respectable than those who took in-door apprentices, their trades were more remunerative, the parents preferred putting their children to them as apprentices ; and, he added, his experience as a magistrate, showed most distinctly that the great majority of complaints, with respect to apprentices, were made by, or against in-door apprentices, and arose from their being employed after the hours of their regular work, to do various domestic work for the wives of their masters.

Mr. Joseph Green James said, that he objected to apprenticing boys to the factors, as they did not complete any article they manufactured, and therefore the boys would really learn no trade, and that it was impossible for any one to engage in such business without a large amount of capital.

The Mayor entirely denied both representations, and challenged Mr. James to mention any case in which factors did not make some of the articles they sold. He mentioned a number of instances in which persons now occupying highly respectable positions had risen by their ability, without any capital to commence with, and maintained, that by confining the Fishley Charity to in-door apprentices, the trustees shut out its recipients from the most remunerative trades in the town, in which out-door apprentices were almost exclusively taken. One of the most flourishing trades in the town, was that of a currier ; a journeyman in which, earned from 25s. to 45s. per week. Another important trade was that of brown saddlers, where all the capital a journeyman required, was tools which could be purchased for 25s., and with which he could earn from 25s. to 45s., or 50s. per week. Brushmakers, in wood and bone, got high wages ; and carriage lamp makers, of which there were several in the town, got 25s. to 35s. per week ; tinmen and gas fitters were also both good trades. In all these trades, a very large proportion of the apprentices, in fact all, with a few exceptions, were out-door apprentices. Their hours of labour were fixed, and in times of great activity, they received extra wages for making overtime, while in-door apprentices were employed to do domestic service after leaving their employment.

Mr. Stubbs confirmed the truth of these representations, from his experience in connexion with the Wollaston Charity; boys being put out as out-door apprentices by the trustees of that charity.

The Mayor remarked that the practice of the Fishley Charity, was only to have one copy of the indenture prepared, which was in a book, and in case of any dispute, the secretary of the trustees, (Mr. James, who at present resided at a distance), had to attend; the boy's master paying the expense of his visit.

Both Mr. Ward, and Mr. Wilkinson, expressed their concurrence in the statements made by the Mayor, and the Inspector suggested the employment of the charity in exhibitions, open to schools of all denominations, a plan of which Dr. Burton appeared to approve.

From further evidence it was shown that the trustees of the Fishley Charity had, in 1848, received 460*l.*, by the sale of mines under a portion of the estate, and that proceedings in Chancery, for powers to lease such mines, and the surface, and to sell a small portion of the former, had been instituted, by Mr. J. G. James, as solicitor to the trustees, and that *the costs of the suit were 459*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*, thus leaving a balance of 14*s.* 6*d.*, of the sale monies, for the charity.**

Mr. Wilkinson, (town clerk), asked for the minute book, containing the authority to commence the Chancery suit, and inquired if Mr. James, when he obtained that authority, had informed the trustees what the probable expense of the proceedings would be?

Mr. James replied, *that he had not, as it was impossible to foresee what expense would be incurred, although, (in answer to another question), he acknowledged that there was no opposition throughout the entire suit.*

[From such disciples of Lycurgus, "Good Lord deliver us!!"]

Mr. James was then examined, relative to the *Bentley Hay Charity*. He stated that 220*l.* were acquired by the corporation, in 1702, in connection with this charity, which sum was to be devoted to the benefit of the poor. Only 141*l.* were so expended, leaving 79*l.* undevoted to that purpose.

It was stated that a workhouse was built, and it was supposed, out of these funds, but there was no distinct proof to that effect.

* The costs were taxed at £37*s.*, and the taxing amounted to £80 6*s.* 4*d.*



Mr. James said, even if this were so, it would be an improper mode of appropriating the money, and he thought the corporation ought to be called upon to make over a rent charge to this amount to the municipal trustees, to whom he was secretary.

The Mayor and Town Clerk intimated that there must be some proof, further than a mere statement that this money was wrongly appropriated, but if it was plainly proved to be so, the corporation would doubtless be prepared to give a bond for that amount.

It appeared that the workhouse was ordered to be sold, on the new poor-law passing. That subsequently a lawsuit ensued, in which Mr. James was engaged, on the part of the trustees, and the property was *swallowed up by the costs of the suit*. A house had been originally left to the corporation, by Thomas Harris, chargeable with a payment of 4*l.* a-year, to the organist of the parish church, and called HARRIS'S GIFT. This house was given for a workhouse, the corporation still paying the 4*l.*, and when it and other premises which had been added to it, (as the workhouse required to be enlarged), were directed to be sold by the new poor-law commissioners, (the proceeds to go towards the quota of the borough of Walsall, for the erection of the new union workhouse), the municipal trustees, for whom Mr. J. G. James acted, claimed the whole, and a Chancery suit followed, to which the municipal trustees, the corporation, and the overseers were parties. The case was heard in January, 1846, and the Master of the Rolls directed that the property should be sold. It was disposed of for 220*l.*, which sum was paid into court, its value having decreased greatly from dilapidation, during the progress of the suit. When the suit ended, the master decided that the costs of all parties should be paid out of the estate, *which absorbed the whole of the funds*.

[It is needless to add that the effect of these proceedings has been the *total destruction of the charity*.]

By further evidence, adduced in the course of the examination, it appeared that the *Fishley Estate* consisted of a dwelling-house, and forty acres of farm land, although it had been represented to contain only 37*A.* 3*R.* 37*P.* That one portion of this property was let to John and Thomas Cadman, from year to year, at a rental of 46*l.*; and another, consisting of a plot of land, (only 3*A.* 5*P.*), was

detached from the rest by the Essington canal, for which was paid 6*l.* That the rent of the farm had at one time been 50*l.*, but it had been reduced to 46*l.* for many years. That by a valuation made in 1851, (and which was produced to the Inspector), the surface rent was valued at 42*l.* That a report was submitted to Chancery, in 1847, affirming the lease of the Fishley Estate, at the rate of 1*s.* 8*d.* for coal, and 1*s.* 10*d.* for ironstone, for a term of forty years, at the minimum rent of 50*l.* per quarter, or 200*l.* per annum, (exclusive of the surface), and at a rent of 60*l.* for the buildings, and surface land, and 3*l.* 10*s.* per acre for every acre of the colliery, and that such report was confirmed. That applications had since been made for leases of the mines, but not on the terms settled by the court, and no offers had been received for the land at the present price; nor had anything been done under the confirmed order of the court, except making publicly known that the land was to be let.

That the master also found that the mines under a detached piece of the Fishley Estate, and under the lands of the Bentley Hay Charity, should be sold, at certain prices. Under this order the mines beneath both, were put up for sale, by auction, on the 16th May, 1848, but were not sold, the biddings being under the reserved prices; subsequently, the mines under the detached portion of the Fishley Estate, containing 3*A.* 5*P.*, were sold, (as before mentioned), for 460*l.*, and a lease was granted of the surface, for forty-two years, to Mr. William Ward, at the before-stated rent of 6*l.* yearly.

That in 1798, the corporation of Walsall sold to the proprietors of the Birmingham Canal Company, that part of the site of the canal which crosses this portion of the estate, and also a small piece of land, on the south of the canal, which was cut off by the same, for a sum of 74*l.* 10*s.*; *but that there was no evidence to show that the corporation had accounted for this fund to the charity.*

That after the passing of the "Municipal Act," and by an order of the 31st January, 1837, there was an appointment of eight trustees to the municipal charities. By the Court of Chancery, it was found that the "Organist Charity" was not included, and early in 1841, a further petition was presented, for an appointment of

trustees to this charity, and for the supply of vacancies, caused by the death of two, of the eight trustees, as well as for an increase of the number. On that petition, the court appointed four new trustees, in connexion with the six old ones, for the whole of these charities. The old trustees were John James, Richard James, Joseph Cowley, Thomas Hildick, James Thornhill, and Charles Eyland. The four new ones, appointed in 1842, were Thomas Pool Brettell, William Smith, J. Burton, Esq., M.D., and Joseph Newman.

The second petition also solicited new trustees, for Molesley's Dole, and the Bascotte Estate, but this was afterwards abandoned at the advice of counsel, inasmuch as it involved the question of the adverse title of the corporation.

FOWLER'S, OR THE DISSENTERS' SUNDAY SCHOOL CHARITY.

(*Recent Inquiry*).

The Rev. E. Myers, Unitarian Minister, attended to give evidence respecting this charity. It appeared that George Fowler, by will dated 30th June, 1699, bequeathed a close of land upon trust, and with the intent and purpose that the yearly rent of the property be received and disposed of, for "the teaching and instructing of poor children of the town of Walsall." The last appointment of trustees was on the 5th January, 1855, when Samuel Thornton, William Bowen, William S. Green, John Green, Richard Corrie Bache, Henry Smith, William Myring, Joseph Dixon, John Wilcox, Thomas Stephenson, Hill Thornton, John James Melhuish, Charles Clifford, Timothy Kenrick, William Wills, James Russell, together with John Day, and William Lowe, (who had since disclaimed the same trusts), were appointed.

The original will, and all the deeds, describe the land as being in Windmill Field, the boundaries of which are well known. Mr. Wilkinson, (town clerk), observed that there was a singular fact connected with this charity. The will of the founder described the land as containing four acres, in the Windmill Field, but the property had diminished down to 2A. 1R. 29P. Twelve years since, the close had been enclosed by a hedge on the south side, on which side Mr. John Forster was the proprietor of part of the adjoining land. When the report of the last commission was made, Mr.

Walhouse claimed fifteen yards, and his representatives had at the present moment twenty-one yards at the same place.

Mr. Myres remarked that no one appeared to have been consulted or advised, on the part of the charity, at the time that the fence was made.

Mr. Forster, the present owner of the land on the south, acquired the property by an exchange with Mr. Walhouse. Joseph Smith was the tenant, both of Mr. Forster and the trustees, and the hedge was planted by Mr. Walhouse, under the direction of Mr. Forster. The whole plot of land, if the new fences were out of the way, and if the measurement be made down to the old fence on the south side, would be 3*A.* 2*R.*, which, (the Inspector observed) at least raised the suggestion that the whole was comprised in the original demise. The payment of 2*L.* 2*s.* yearly, or some other rent or acknowledgment would seem to have been paid, in respect of the strip of land, now in dispute, on the south side.

Under an order of the charity commissioners, the 2*A.* 1*R.* 29*P.*, were let to Mr. F. B. Oerton, on lease of ninety-nine years, commencing from March 25th, 1855, at a rent of 25*L.*

The Inspector said, that if the trustees thought fit to take steps for the recovery of the land, the charity commissioners would grant them a certificate.

It was stated that the school, in connexion with this charity, was behind the chapel in Stafford Street, and was open every Sunday, morning and afternoon, and also every Thursday afternoon. As many as seventy children attended on Sundays, being a greater number than the school could comfortably accommodate. That the minister was the superintendent, and received a stipend of 5*L.* 5*s.* per year for that duty. That it was in contemplation to enlarge the school, and build a new room over the present one, for the purpose of receiving day scholars; the new school to be placed under government inspection. The old meeting house, in High Street, was sold about twenty or thirty years ago. The congregation then removed to the present chapel, the trustees of which were also trustees of the charity.

With respect to the distribution of the charities for educational purposes, the Rev. C. Dunne, incumbent of St. Peter's stated that

his district was within the foreign of Walsall, and the municipal borough, and the population was about eight thousand. There were three schools, supported by subscriptions, sermons, and the payment of two-pence per week by each scholar. Four hundred and fifty boys, girls, and infants, attended. A new school was in progress of erection, which, when completed, would be speedily filled. One of the school-rooms was in a wretched state, from want of repairs.

THE ROYAL FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

A large number of gentlemen were present during this investigation, among whom may be specified, F. B. Oerton, Esq., (mayor), S. Stephens, W. Ward, S. Lowe, R. Jesson, H. C. Windle, C. F. Darwall, J. W. Newman, F. A. Edwards, S. Wilkinson, junior, (town clerk), &c., &c.

The Inspector opened the proceedings, by saying that he had on the preceding evening spent three or four hours at this excellent institution, in which very material changes appeared to have taken place, since the report of a former commission of inquiry, in the year 1823. At the time that report was made, the Grammar School was conducted in Park Street, the Commercial School in St. Matthew's churchyard, and St. Paul's Chapel had not been built. In the year 1837, the system of the school was re-modelled, by the governors, at the suggestion, and under the direction of the Rev. C. F. Childe. The rules then drawn up were those under which the school was at present conducted. In the Grammar School sixty-six boys were admitted, and in the Commercial School eighty-four. The chapel was built on land purchased from Lord Bradford. The chapel and the land cost about 3,000*l.*, to provide which sum a portion of the stock was sold out. The master of the school was also the chaplain. All the seats were let, and the pew-rents amounted to upwards of 40*l.* annually. A rental of 31*l.* 10*s.* per annum, was also derivable from portions of the land purchased with the site of the chapel. The South Staffordshire Railway Company bought the premises in Park Street, in the year 1847. The governors then purchased a piece of land in Lichfield Street, on which the present school was erected. They had also recently effected an exchange with Lord Hatherton, of the old school

premises and house in the churchyard, for a sum of 50*l.*, in lieu of two houses and gardens adjacent to the new schools in Lichfield Street. In the year 1844, four acres of land at Wood-end were sold by the governors, to the Birmingham Canal Company, the governors at the same time purchasing from the company an equal number of acres near the same place. This arrangement was not quite completed, but the governors were in receipt of the rent of the land so purchased, and were also entitled to interest on the purchase money of the land taken by the company. The following sums in stock belonged to the charity:—3,363*l.* 10*s.* 5*d.*, and 2,979*l.* Part of this amount arose from the sale of mines, under land at the Birchills, and part from the surface. The dividend on the stock amounted to 174*l.* 10*s.* 11*d.* The total income of the school was 873*l.* per annum. There were, at the present time, three or four applications for admission into the Grammar School, and fifteen or sixteen for the Commercial School. Any boys residing in the parish were received in their turn, the qualification being, that they should be subject to the rule that when two brothers were already in the school, a boy of another family should get the preference to a third brother. Practically, the benefits of the school were limited to the children of members of the Church of England.

The Mayor said that he considered this involved a hardship, and illiberally interfered with religious creeds of different denominations. He suggested that the boys should, (if the parents so desired), be liberated from the injunction of attending chapel, or learning the catechism; the only qualification being, that the parents should see that their boys attended *some* place of worship, according to whatever persuasion they professed. He had been spoken to by a gentleman, one of the magistrates of the borough, a Roman Catholic, and who complained that his children were deprived of what he conceived to be their birthright, namely, a participation in the advantages of this school, by provisions with which he could not comply. He, (the mayor), was a member of the church of England, but he thought it his duty to bring these representations, as mayor of the borough, before the inspector. Similar representations had been made to him by Baptists and others.

Mr. Wilkinson here remarked that his father had applied to the Rev. Mr. Pugh, the head master, for the admission of his brother. Mr. Pugh replied that he could not become a scholar, without saying what was untrue, since he had never been baptised. A letter to this effect was handed in by Mr. Darwall, which had been received by the trustees, from Mr. S. Wilkinson, senior.

The Inspector observed that, as the governors were present, he wished to hear any observation they had to offer, with reference to the modification of Rule 7, which required every boy attending the school to attend St. Paul's Church on the Sabbath day. It had been suggested that this rule should be rescinded, as being of too arbitrary a nature, and that the boys of those parents who wished it, should be excused from that injunction, the only qualification required being, that the parents should guarantee their boys' attendance at a place of worship according to their own persuasion. He quite acquiesced in the suggestion, and hoped to find such a regulation would in future be carried out.

R. Jesson, Esq., one of the governors of the school, said, that he was opposed to any interference with an established, and in his opinion very necessary, restriction, and called attention to several provisions in the Act of Parliament, under which the Grammar School was administered, which, in his opinion, made it compulsory that the pupils should be instructed in the doctrines and principles of the "Established Church." The master was required to conduct service according to the ritual of the church, to catechise the boys and girls in the church catechism during Lent, everything in connection with the school required the sanction of the bishop of the diocese, the governors were required to be members of the church of England, and they, as at present advised, felt it incumbent upon them to observe the provisions of the act.

Mr. Wilkinson thought it was doubtful whether they were compelled to observe all the requirements of the act, if they were unsuited to the present time, and referred to section 68, which provided for altering any provision which might become inconvenient, or inapplicable, by an application to the Lord Chancellor, and probably the new "Charitable Trusts' Act" would enable them to arrive at it by a shorter process.

The Inspector remarked that Sir Samuel Romilly's bill, in 1818, gave a general power to the same effect as the section quoted. The House of Lords, by an amendment, had limited the jurisdiction of the charity commissioners, to charities not exceeding 10*l.* in annual value, which would, of course, shut out this charity. In a scheme elsewhere adopted, however, there was a clause giving power to exempt children from attendance at church on Sunday, and from learning the "Church Catechism," on the parents making a written application to that effect, and engaging to provide for their religious instruction, and their attendance at public worship on the Sabbath. He conceived that there were many things to be found in old acts of Parliament, which it would be inexpedient to carry out in the present day.

Mr. Jesson inquired whether the act of Parliament was to be adhered to, or not. He upheld the liberality of the institution, by contending that, notwithstanding the injunction, there were many Dissenters whose children attended the school.

The Inspector said, that if it were so, one would suppose the governors would have to expurgate many things from their book. He thought the rule objectionable, and if it could be modified by the power vested in the charity commissioners, so as to enhance the benefits of the school, without rendering the governors liable to a breach of the act, he did not see why they should object to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Mr. Jesson replied, that even if they were so inclined, they could not agree to any alteration, without the consent of the bishop; and, as at present advised, they should adhere to the Act of Parliament.

From a statement handed in, it appeared that the school was opened, both morning and afternoon, by the boys reading the second lesson, after which, some of the prayers from the Book of Common Prayer were read, the pupils making the proper responses. The pupils in the Grammar School learnt "Watts' Scripture History," and the younger boys, in the Commercial School, "Dr. Marsh's Questions on the Church Catechism." In Lent, as the statute directed, they were publicly catechised in the "Church Catechism." There was generally a numerous attendance on these

occasions. In order to carry out this catechising, it was necessary that the boys should learn the catechism. This statement, which was drawn up by the Rev. J. B. Pugh, confirmed the observation made by Mr. Jesson, that the school already contained a number of boys, whose parents were Dissenters.

Mr. Windle, another of the governors, remarked that the religious instruction was of a most catholic character, as might be premised from "Watts' Scripture History" being employed.

Mr. Jesson thought the effect of the arrangement suggested, would render religious instruction in the school impracticable.

The Inspector did not, by any means, contemplate this. He acknowledged that it appeared difficult to him to teach religion, without teaching some particular belief; still, he understood that the plan he had mentioned, was found to work without any practicable difficulty.

Mr. Howard Fletcher, also a governor, observed that at present there were no vacancies in the school.

The Inspector said that certainly made a difference, as it might, perhaps, be presumed that those who were ready to comply with the established regulations of the school, had a prior claim to others.

During the whole of the conversation, all parties bore testimony to the efficient state of the school, which Mr. Wilkinson remarked made exclusion a greater hardship.

The Mayor here drew attention to several complaints made to him, by parents, as to the chastisement to which their boys had been subjected.

Mr. Jesson denied the practice of undue severity, and said that any complaint made to the governors, would meet with due attention.

The Inspector then alluded to the general supposition, that the school was practically restricted to children of respectable parents, such, he was happy to find, was not the case. He was pleased to meet a boy with a square cap driving a milk cart. There appeared to be a want of educational provision in the district of St. Peter's, in which the Grammar School had property. As the property was valuable, he recommended that the governors should set a good example to other proprietors, and contribute liberally to the schools there.

The Mayor further observed that the act rendered the property applicable to girls' schools, of which there was a great deficiency in the borough.

The disbursements of the schools appeared as follows:—In the year ending December, 1854, a sum of 559*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*, was expended in rebuilding and repairing buildings on the farms. Other repairs and unpaid rents were in process of being extended. At the last year there was a balance of 27*l.* 1*s.* The payment of 20*l.* to the school in Walsall Wood, had been discontinued.

A report made by the assistant-master of King Edward's School, Birmingham, (highly praising the ability displayed by the pupils, and the general tone of the school), was also read.* The Inspector then closed the investigation, by congratulating the governors on the efficient manner in which the institution was generally conducted, as well as its present very prosperous condition.

SYVERN'S CHARITY.

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

According to an old benefaction table, William Syvern, by will, (no date mentioned), gave to the poor of Walsall 100*l.*, and several tenements in Birmingham, were also settled, for the payment of 5*l.* yearly for ever.

It appeared that this sum of 5*l.* was charged on freehold property, in Horse-shoe Yard, St. Martin's Lane, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, and that the charity had been added to the gift of *Thomas Webbe*; both being administered together, by the churchwardens for the time being. Every Sunday eight penny loaves were given away in the church. These were paid for by a portion from Syvern's charity, and a portion from Webbe's gift. The balance was given in gowns, &c., to poor women every Christmas, together with clothing, under Henry Sone's charity.

WEBBE'S CHARITY.

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

Thomas Webbe, by deed dated 11th July, 1602, gave to John Curties, of Walsall, (then mayor), and eleven others, their heirs, and assigns, a yearly rent of twenty shillings, issuing out of Cow Leasowe, in Shelfield, in trust, to distribute among the poor of Walsall, on Good Friday yearly for ever.

* Vide Description of "Grammar School," page 54.

It was shown that this charity was distributed in connection with that of Syvern's.

WILLIAM PARKER'S CHARITY.

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

William Parker, by will dated 24th May, 1618, gave to the master and wardens of the "Merchant Tailors' Company," the sum of 400*l.*, in trust, to purchase lands, and out of the issues and profits thereof, "to pay yearly the sum of 20*l.*, to a minister to serve the cure in the chapel of Great Bloxwich, being a chapel of ease in the parish of Walsall; provided also, that such minister should live a single man, and unmarried, and should teach freely in the said chapel, or the dwelling-house (called the parson's house), the male children of Great Bloxwich, Little Bloxwich, Walsall, and Harden, and that the said minister be allowed by the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and be taken out of St. John's College, in Oxford, and be some of those who have been sent thither out of the Merchant Tailors' School, in London. And for want of such to be had from the said college, if there should be none fit or desirous of being placed there for the said stipend, then, the inhabitants of the said town of Great Bloxwich, should make choice of one where they should find a fit man."

It was proved that this annuity was regularly paid by the "Merchant Tailors' Company," to the incumbent of Bloxwich, who made yearly a report of the state of the schools; and that the amount was divided equally, between himself and the chapel clerk.

RICHARD STONE'S CHARITY, (OF CALDMORE).

On an old table of benefactions, it is inscribed that Richard Stone, of Caldmore, left an annuity of six shillings and eight-pence, arising out of Palfrey Green Leasow, then in the possession of Henry Stone, Esq.,—"such sum to be distributed in bread yearly to the poor of the borough."

By the *Commission of Inquiry*, in 1823, it appeared that a dole of six shillings and eight-pence was formerly paid out of some pieces of land called "Fullbrook Land," adjoining Palfrey Green, of which sum, six shillings was expended in providing white bread, for the poor, which was given away by the vicar,—six-pence was paid to the vicar, and two-pence to the clerk. In the map of the

foreign, the pieces of land were numbered 1,501, to 1,505. The piece No. 1,501 adjoined land called Palfrey Green. No payment had been made by the occupier of this property, for many years, but the commissioners were of opinion that these lands were chargeable with the dole, and ordered that application should be made to the then proprietor, Mrs. Slack, to restore the payment.

In the "*Recent Inquiry*," (1855), Mr. G. B. Stubbs stated that application had been made for a restoration of the payment, but that the appeal seemed to have been fruitless, for the command had not since been complied with. The land was now occupied by a person named Wilks, a butcher, of Darlaston, who was tenant to the devisee of the late Peter Cotterell, of Lozell's Lane, Handsworth, near Birmingham, who had been ordered to give an explanation. Mr. Cotterell died about two or three years ago, and his will would probably have been proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

The Inspector observed that it would be advisable to refer this case to the Attorney-General.

WILCOX'S CHARITY.

By the report of the parish committee, in 1804, John Wilcox gave a sum of sixteen shillings, to be distributed by the vicar, to the poor of the borough. This amount was then paid by Mr. John Blakemore, of Darlaston, to the vicar of Walsall, out of a piece of land in that parish, called "Radley Gutter Field."

The *Commissioners*, in their *Report* of 1823, state as follows:—

"John Partridge Blakemore, Esq., of West Bromwich, informed us that he is owner of a piece of land, in Darlaston, called 'Radley Gutter Field,' in which (but in what part of it he was unable to say), is a day's work of land, in respect of which, 14*s.* a-year has always been paid to the vicar of Walsall, for the poor. Mr. Blakemore does not know from whom this charity originated, nor is it mentioned in his deeds; but he conceives, that the day's work of land itself, belongs to the poor of Walsall, and that the payment of 14*s.* is, in fact, a reserved rent, and not a rent charge. He engaged to ascertain, if possible, the exact boundary of the poor's land, and if he could not do so, to set out half an acre in 'Radley Gutter Field,' to be considered, in future, the portion belonging to the poor. It is highly desirable that this should be done, as there is coal under the land, which may become valuable."

"In consequence of the death of Mr. Pratt, the late vicar, we could not learn anything as to the actual distribution of the money, but a paper was

produced to us, in his hand writing, stating that the payment made by Mr. Blakemore was 14*s.* a-year, to be distributed to fourteen poor people, ‘in the parish of Bloxwich.’”

Recent Inquiry, (1855).

Mr. J. G. James deposed that the land referred to in the report of the commissioners, was sold. The vicar and churchwardens of the parish of Walsall, and the churchwardens of the foreign, by deed, bearing date 2nd April, 1845, conveyed to Messrs. Addenbrook, Smith, and Pidcock, in consideration of 150*l.*, paid to the parties of the first part, all that plot of land known as “Walsall Charity Land,” containing half an acre, or thereabouts, and being part of an enclosed piece of land called “Radley Gutter Field.”

As there were no covenants for title, it was declared and agreed, that the purchase money should be forthwith invested in the names of the Rev. George Fisk, (vicar), and the churchwardens, and that those parties should apply the dividends to the same charitable purposes, to which the rent charge was applicable.

The conveyance stated that the amount of rent was twenty shillings, and he (Mr. James), thought it was possible that Mr. Blakemore increased the rent, but did not otherwise take any step to improve the portion of the charity land established.

The sum named 150*l.* was paid to the vicar and churchwardens of both townships, on the 10th April, 1844, and was invested in the purchase of 148*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.*, stock, in the names of the Rev. George Fisk, John James, William Smith, and Walter Dudley.

It was here observed that the stock stood in the names of the Rev. G. Fisk, Charles Foster, Henry C. Windle, and John James.

Mr. Joseph Green James replied, that the gentlemen in whose names the fund was placed, executed a deed of trust, dated 8th June, 1845, but he could not ascertain in whose hands this document was, that it ought to be in the parish chest. The fund would be conveniently managed in the names of the official trustees.

Mr. Frank James:—“The dividend amounted to 9*l.* 2*s.*, and was received by the churchwardens, through the Walsall Bank, and placed to the account of the gowns and flannels which they distributed.”

The Inspector:—"The poor of the foreign do not receive any benefit from this charity. In order that their claims should be attended to, it would be necessary that some part of this fund should be paid to the churchwardens of the foreign of Walsall. It does not appear, however, from the information, that any part of the charity was intended for the foreign."

SHAWE'S CHARITY.

Michael Shawe, by will dated 14th June, 1617, gave some closes called "Shawe's Leasowes," at Towns-end, Walsall, to his cousin John Wollaston, to hold the same to him and his heirs, upon conditions, yearly for ever, to bestow upon the poor of Walsall, on Good Friday, the sum of forty shillings. He further directed that a close, which was charity land, near Wood-end, should be sold by his executors for the term of three or four years, for, and towards the payment of his debts, and towards the funeral and "bringing him home honestly," and that the surplus should be bestowed amongst such poor as should be at his burial; and he willed that the inheritance and rents thereof, should afterwards come to, and amongst the poor inhabiting Walsall.

According to the *Commissioners' Report* of 1823, Messrs. Forsters, bankers, of Walsall, as agents for Mr. Joseph Smith, the then owner of the property, had for many years given away this sum of forty shillings, charged upon "Shawe's Leasowes." This sum was distributed in bread to poor people, a shilling loaf to each; and in the time of the late Mr. Forster, forty shilling loaves were given away in like manner, every Good Friday, by tickets, distributed to persons selected by himself and friends. Since his death, the distribution had not been regularly made on Good Friday, but generally a few days after Christmas; and while bread was cheaper, eighty loaves have been so distributed.

Nothing was known of the close mentioned in the last part of the testator's will, nor could the commissioners find that the rent of any such close had ever been applied to charitable purposes, neither did the table of benefactions, though of ancient date, notice the bequest.

By the "*Recent Inquiry*, (1855), it appeared that this rent charge of forty shillings, was still payable out of Shawe's Leasowes,

which belonged to Lord Hatherton. The fund was formerly distributed under directions given by Mr. John Forster, late Lord Hatherton's agent. The vicar and mayor were now intrusted with the distribution.

DEE'S AND GORWAY'S CHARITIES.

John Dee, gentleman, of Walsall, by feoffment, in the town chest, dated 20th December, 1621, granted one meadow, called "Sling Meadow," to feoffees and trustees, the rent to be paid to the vicar and constable, and their successors, for ever, to be appropriated by them as follows:—one shilling each to be retained by themselves, and the residue given to sixty poor men and women of the borough, on Christmas eve.

By the *Commissioners' Report*, in 1823, it appears that the land mentioned in the above deed, and then in the occupation of Barnett Lowe, consisted of two pieces of meadow, containing in all 1*a.4*b.39*p.*** which it was said belonged to this charity. In the lease, two distinct rents are reserved, the one payable to the lessor, the other, amounting to 1*l. 1*s.**, for the purposes of the charity.

The commissioners found that the sum of 1*l. 1*s.** was regularly paid to the constable of the borough, and by him distributed on Christmas eve. It was generally called the "Widow's Groat Money," but often more than sixty had partaken of the dole.

By some means the original sum of 1*l. 2*s.** had been reduced to 1*l. 1*s.**, but it appeared to them that the donor did not intend to confine his charity to the sum mentioned in the deed, but that the *whole rent of the land ought to be distributed*. The annual value of the two closes was somewhat above 2*l.*, and they (the commissioners) trusted that the full value would be obtained, and distributed according to the previous intention of the donor.

GORWAY'S CHARITY.

An old benefaction table states:—

"Mr. Thomas Gorway gave 2*l.*, to be yearly paid out of his lands in Rushall, and Bromwich, to the poor of Walsall, borough and foreign, on Good Friday."

By the report of the parish committee, in 1804, it appears that John Nicholls, constable of the borough, received 1*l.* from the

widow Martin, of Daw-end; and from Mr. Day, constable of the foreign, the like sum of 1*l.* This report is signed by Joseph Day, the said constable, who was one of the committee.

According to the *Commission of Inquiry*, in 1823, the money was given away on Good Friday, to poor widows of the borough and foreign, two-pence to each: but nothing appeared to have been received by the constable of the foreign on this account, since the year 1811, although it was evident from the report of the committee, already quoted, that it was received, and distributed in, and before, the year 1804.

The commissioners further state that an application by letter had been made to the owner of the property, who replied that he had given directions to his agent, in Walsall, to resume the payment to the foreign, finding, on investigation, that there was such a charge on the estate.

On the "*Recent Inquiry*," (1855), Mr. Jos. Worrad was called to give evidence respecting these charities. He said that he was borough constable, in the year 1854, and distributed the funds thereof, in the following manner: the amount of twenty shillings, left by Gorway, was divided among sixty widows, (4*d.* to each,) on Good Friday; and the like amount, left by Dee, he divided, in like manner, on St. Thomas's day. He took care to bestow the charity on those only who were aged, or otherwise deserving objects.

The money, on behalf of Dee's charity, was paid to him by Messrs. Barnett and Marlow, solicitors of Walsall, as agents of the Rev. J. C. Hazledine, the owner of the property.

[Not the slightest notice appears to have been taken of the opinion given by the commissioners, in 1823, with reference to Dee's charity. If, as they thought, the whole rent of the land belonged to the charity, why were not some steps taken to secure the claim? Of what use are Commissions of Inquiry, if facts elicited are not turned to good account, and decisions practically carried out? It is the bounden duty of the trustees, to see that this right should no longer remain dormant.]

HINTON'S CHARITY.

Roger Hinton, of Rickerscoat, in the county of Stafford, by will, dated 5th February, 1684, gave to the poor of Walsall, borough

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and foreign, a rent charge of 5*l.* per annum, and one-fifth of the surplus rents of an estate, at Rickersecoat, after the payment of this and other rent charges to other places.

According to the *Inquisition*, in 1823, these rents were disposed of in the distribution of gowns and coats, to poor persons, of the borough, selected by the resident trustees of the charity. On the 31st May, 1822, there was a balance of 20*l.* 1*s.*, which was distributed in clothes, during the ensuing winter. The payment of these rents being very irregular; the trustees generally kept a year's balance in hand to provide for the winter's distribution, in case of any delay in the payment.

From the evidence adduced on the "Recent Inquiry," (1855), it appeared, that Mr. J. V. Barber, a resident in Leamington, was the only surviving trustee, of those chosen to represent Walsall. The required number of trustees appointed in 1803, were forty-two. The amount received on account of this charity from 1850, to 1854, inclusive, had been 124*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*, as thus shown:—

	£ s. d.
1850.....	27 13 4
1851.....	20 10 8
1852.....	28 1 7
1853.....	22 12 6
1854.....	25 12 5

These sums were paid to the secretary of the surviving Walsall trustee, who was also the secretary of *Wollaston's*, and *H. Stone's Charities*.* In the year ending January, 1855, the sum of 8*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* was expended in eleven cloth coats, and a further sum of 14*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.*, in sixty-two cotton gowns. It was here explained that the articles were made, on a written order from Mr. Barber, to a draper of the town, on receiving intimation from the secretary that sufficient money was in hands. That they were then sent to a lady named Wood, daughter of the last surviving trustee, and to whom Mr. Barber entirely left the administration of the trust, when he ceased to reside in Walsall. The coats and gowns were then distributed by her, to persons bringing tickets, from the trustees, of "Wollaston's" and "Stone's" charities. It also appeared that there was a balance in the Walsall branch of the Birmingham Banking Company, of 66*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.*, to the account of Hinton's

* Mr. Mason, of Walsall, is the present secretary.

charity, the cheques on which were signed by Mr. Barber. It was observed that Mr. James Beddoe, one of the trustees, had hitherto supplied the coats and gowns to this charity, which placed him in a position of buying from, and selling to, himself.

The Inspector remarked, that such a system should be carefully avoided, and would be obviated in the new scheme.

It was stated that the sum of 5*l.*, yearly, was paid by Earl St. Vincent, to Mr. Bromwich, the baker, who supplied the bread for distribution, at the parish church, on Sundays.

The Inspector was of opinion that there should be a provision in the trust deed, for the administration of the charity, in case of the death of the Walsall trustees; and observed, that he could not understand the condition by which this payment—which would seem to be out of the Rickerscoate estate—was the payment from the earl, St. Vincent. The 5*l.* rent charge on the charity, did not appear to be accounted for. He would recommend an application to be made to the “General Trustees” of Hinton’s charity, on the subject, for if that sum was received, it would be included in the general account.

CHARITIES OF HENRY STONE THE ELDER, AND HENRY STONE THE YOUNGER.

According to the *Commission of Inquiry*, in 1823, the original documents by which the charity of *Henry Stone the elder* was established, were not to be found, but their substance was given in a trust deed, dated June, 1779. This deed sets forth that “*HENRY STONE*, of Walsall, did in his life-time give, direct, and appoint, (which, from another document, he appears to have done by deed poll, dated 19th September, 1639), the sum of 8*4l. 14s.*, to be paid yearly, for ever, out of his lands, &c., in the parish of Walsall, and also in the parishes of Castle Bromwich and Yardley, in the counties of Warwick and Worcester, and to be disposed of in the manner following,” viz:—

	s. s. d.
“To be divided in equal proportions, on Christmas Eve and Good Friday, amongst such of the poorer sort of householders, in the borough and foreign, as shall attend church, and be reputed honest livers	13 0 0
For the repairs of Walsall church, and of the gallery therein, which said donor had in his life-time erected	<u>3 0 0</u>
Carried Forward	16 0 0

	£	s.	d.
Brought Forward	16	0	0
To purchase twelve coats and twelve gowns, for twelve poor men and women of the borough of Walsall, same to be dis- tributed on Christmas Eve, yearly	7	10	0
For bread, to be distributed every Sabbath Day, to the same poor men and women to whom the coats and gowns should be given	5	4	0
For an annual banquet for the heirs of the said Henry Stone, and the trustees, their heirs, and assigns, at their yearly meet- ing, to examine the accounts and perform the trusts ...	2	0	0
For the maintenance of a sermon, to be preached monthly, by an orthodox Protestant minister of the Church of England, the first Tuesday in every month...	3	0	0
To the minister of the parish church of Cannock	1	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£	34	14
	0		

The lands and premises charged with this annuity, were after the death of Henry Stone the younger, disposed of in separate parcels, and the rent charge appears to have been apportioned among different parts of the property, in the following manner:—

	£	s.	d.
1.—Upon the premises at Castle Bromwich and Yardley...	17	14	0
2.—On land at Coal Pool	7	0	0
3.—On a house and land at Bloxwich	3	0	0
4.—On the close called the Lower Pannels	7	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£	34	14
	0		

Extracts from the Commissioners' Report:—

"The property of this land in Coal Pool, is involved in much obscurity. It seems that the trustees have formerly acted as landlords, and let the land for 7*l.* per annum. It is so stated in a letter from Mr. Hodgkins, solicitor to the trustees, dated 4th November, 1795, which is corroborated by an entry in the trustees' accounts for the year 1778, of 'one guinea received for three trees, felled on the estate at Coal Pool.' Mr. Hodgkins suggests, in the letter alluded to, that the land might have been given up to the trustees, by some former proprietor, who thought it not worth the 7*l.*, charged thereupon. The present occupier, Thomas Ward, claims it as his freehold, by long possession in his wife's family.

"From a memorandum in the accounts of Mr. Jacob Smith, who was managing trustee from 1779 to 1801, it appears that the premises at Bloxwich were let by the trustees, for twenty-one years, at 3*l.* a.-year.

"We cannot discover by what right the trustees assumed to act as landlords on this occasion, nor can any conjecture be offered on the subject, except such as that before suggested, with respect to the land at Coal Pool.

" From documents in the possession of the trustees, it appears that *7l.* a-year was paid in the years 1751, 1752, and 1753, by a family of the name of Stubbs, in respect of land called the Pannels, but no trace of this payment is found subsequent to that time; and the local situation of this portion of the property, was supposed to be a matter of much uncertainty.

" In 1798, a Chancery suit was commenced by the trustees, to enforce this payment of *7l.* out of the property called 'Lower Pannels,' as the proportion of the annuity of *34l. 14s.* This suit appears to have gone on for several years, when the bill was amended, by making the children of the four defendants parties thereto, but no further proceedings appear to have taken place.

" Several depositions were taken in this suit, from which it would appear that the ground called the 'Lower Pannels' was well known, and was called by some of the deponents 'White Bread Piece,' or 'Third Pannels.'

" This evidence appears to us sufficient to identify the land called 'Lower Pannels,' with a field now called 'White Bread Piece;' one undivided fourth part of which was purchased by Mr. John Adams, from Mr. Thomas Devey Wightwick, and the other three-fourths were the property of the late Mr. Joseph Stubbs, of Perry Barr, and now belong to his devisees. We see no reason why the proprietors of this field should not be called upon for the *7l.* per year, now unpaid, of Henry Stone's annuity, and which appears, on the division of his property, to have been to this part apportioned.

" For some time previous to the year 1815, the affairs of this charity appear to have been most irregularly administered. Upon the death of Mr. Jacob Smith, in 1801, (during whose superintendence the charity seems to have been well attended to), a balance of *60l. 12s. 10d.*, then in his hands, (not including *5l.* a-year, given by Henry Stone the younger, of which he kept a separate account), was paid over to Mr. Hodgkins, the solicitor to the trustees, who received on account of the charity, between that time and 1806, *180l. 4s.*; of the application of which sum, *no trace appears in the trust accounts, except 1l. paid to Mr. Bull, for preaching.* Between this time and 1808, Mr. C. Blackham appears to have received *85l. 2s. 3d.*, on account of the charity; *no part of which was applied to charitable uses, but 17l. 15s. which was paid to one Wilson, a solicitor, (probably for professional services),* leaving a balance at the bankers of *67l. 7s. 3d.* From 1808, to April, 1814, Mr. Samuel Wilson received (including the last balance), *256l. 4s. 6d.*, of which he expended, in occasional distributions, only *50l. 8s. 11d.*, and the balance, amounting to *205l. 15s. 7d.*, was afterwards lost by his insolvency.

" In 1815, the management was undertaken by Mr. Thomas Pearce, as agent for the trustees, and, under his care, again became efficient.

" In 1823, the application of the income was as follows:—For providing coats and gowns, generally for nine poor men and women—the number,

* In the PARISH REPORT of 1804, it is stated that Mr. Hodgkins was the attorney in this suit, and that the rents of the charity were received and stopped by him, till the whole costs were paid. (Report of the Committee of Inquiry, 1804, p. 9).

however, varies—the cost of these averaged about 12*l.* Sums of 2*s.* 6*d.* each distributed to poor persons at Christmas; the amount varies according to the number of recommendations; the largest given by Mr. Pearce was 14*l.* 15*s.* 7*d.*, and the smallest 8*s.* 5*d.*; when the distribution of clothes cost but little, more has been given away in money, and vice versa; the objects of the charity were chiefly widows. (The poor of the foreign were included in these benefactions.) 1*l.* per year paid to the minister of Cannock. 2*l.* for the banquet, and 2*l.* 2*s.* to the secretary, which formed the whole of the expenditure.

"The 3*l.* per year for repairing Walsall church was omitted, as well as the 3*l.* for sermons. It was proposed to the late vicar, that he should preach the sermons, and receive the amount, but this he declined doing.

"The two shillings worth of bread, formerly supplied weekly under Mr. Smith's administration of the charity, and given away in the church according to the founder's direction, had also not been resumed."

The "*Recent Inquiry*" into this charity, was merely a recapitulation of the foregoing particulars.

The present trustees are James Beddoe, Rupert Adams, Joseph Wood, P. P. Pratt, C. F. Cotterill, J. B. Adams, J. H. Curtis, E. E. Stanley, Arthur Adams, Howard Fletcher, F. A. Edwards, W. Harrison, Frederick Thurstan, and Henry Brace.

CHARITY OF HENRY STONE THE YOUNGER.

This charity is a rent charge of 5*l.* yearly, upon certain premises at Castle Bromwich, in Warwickshire, and Yardley, in Worcestershire, from which a part of the annuity given by Henry Stone the elder is also paid. The premises were conveyed by deed, bearing date 5th March, 1777, expressly charged with the aforesaid payment, to be employed in buying, making, and providing five coats, and five gowns, of serviceable cloth, for as many poor men and women, of the borough of Walsall; same to be delivered to them on the 25th December, yearly.

It appeared that since the decease of Mr. Jacob Smith, in 1801, this charity had been disposed of in connection with that of Henry Stone the elder.

NICHOLAS PARKER'S CHARITY.

By an inquisition, taken at Cannock, on the 5th September, 22nd Charles II. (1671), under a commission of charitable uses, it was found that Nicholas Parker, by his will dated 25th March, 1627, devised to his kinsman Nicholas Parker, certain lands in Bloxwich, Rushall, and Aldridge, directing that 4*l.* should be annually paid for ever, out of the said lands, as follows:—To the

poor of Rushall, 1*l.*; towards repairing the parish church of Walsall, 2*l.*; to the poor in the hamlets of Great Blorwiche, 1*l.*; such sums to be paid severally, to the minister and churchwardens of the said places. It appeared, however, that one of the gifts, viz., the 2*l.* left for repairing the church, had been withheld by the devisee, since January, 1651.

According to the *Commission of Inquiry*, in 1823, the benefaction to the poor was recorded on an old tablet, upon which was also the following:—

“Nicholas Parker, by his will, gave 40*s.* yearly, towards the repair of the parish churche of Walsall—to ease the poor inhabitants of their leveys—out of land called Peakers, which Mr. Hawe has upon condicions.”

The Commissioners report thereon, thus:—

“The annual sum of forty shillings out of Peak House, on the Birmingham road, near Walsall, appears to have been paid thus:—*twenty shillings* to the churchwardens of the borough, by whom it is carried to the general account, and *twenty shillings* to the foreign, by whom it was given away in small sums, to such of the poor as seemed in most need. In 1779, a person by the name of Wood purchased these premises, with others called the ‘Hind-field,’ and the ‘Long-field,’ which were conveyed to him free of all incumbrance, except a yearly rent of forty shillings to the poor of Walsall; and among his title deeds was an indenture, dated 22nd January, 3rd Charles I., whereby John Clarkson conveyed to William Hawe two closes, with a barn thereupon, called ‘Peakers,’ in the Wood-end, which the said John Clarkson had, by the gift and devise of Nicholas Parker, with a covenant against incumbrances, except the yearly rent of forty shillings before stated.

“Our opinion is, that the rent charge mentioned in the indenture, is the same as that recorded in the first inscription, on the benefaction table as before stated, and erroneously supposed to have been given for the repair of the church; and it appears to have been a different bequest from that mentioned in the inquisition, which is there stated to have remained in the hands of Nicholas Parker, the nephew and devisee. Under the head of charities in Rushall, the churchwardens of that parish receive twenty shillings annually, from premises there, formerly belonging to the Parker family, and most probably derived from this benefaction.”

During the “*Recent Inquiry*,” (1855), nothing further transpired with reference to this particular charity, but it was stated that, under the will of *John S. Nicholas Parker*, a sum of 16*l.* 10*s.*, bequeathed to certain schools, &c., in the town, had been lost for some time. The Inspector, however, was inclined to think that this charity was recoverable.

WHEATE'S CHARITY.

William Wheate, of the city of Coventry, by will (date unknown), gave and devised to the then "Mayor, and his brethren," the sum of 20*l.*, to buy land, the rent whereof to be given for preaching four sermons, yearly, in Walsall Church, viz.:—on Tuesday in Easter week, and on Tuesday in Whitsun week, on St. John the Baptist's Day, and on the Feast of the Circumcision.

By indenture, dated 18th September, 16th James I., one John Clarkson, in consideration of said sum of 20*l.*, enfeoffed and confirmed to the then mayor and others, a close in Wood-end, to hold the same, upon the trusts declared by the last will of the said William Wheate. This close was subsequently divided into two, containing together 2*A.* 3*R.* 23*P.*

In the *Commissioners' Report* of 1823, it is stated that this land then produced a rental of 8*l.*, yearly, which the vicar for the time being received. It appeared, however, on the "*Recent Inquiry*," that nothing had been paid from this charity for some years. The case was submitted for further investigation.

CURTEY'S CHARITY.

By indenture, dated 13th April, 16th James I., it is witnessed that Ellen Curtey's, in performance of part of the will of her late husband, John Curteys, gave an annuity, or rent charge of 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, issuing out of two meadows in Caldmore, called "Swager's Meadow," and "Bushby Meadow," the same to be distributed by the vicar of Walsall for the time being, amongst poor inhabitants of the borough, on Good Friday, and Christmas Eve, respectively.

The premises called "Swager's Meadow," together with another called "Long Meadow," were conveyed by indenture, dated 4th September, 1783, to one Edward Elwell, free from all incumbrances, except the yearly sum of 13*s.* 4*d.*, issuing out of, and chargeable upon, the said premises, and payable to, or for, the benefit of the poor of Walsall, for ever.

The *Commissioners, in their Inquiry* of 1823, could find no land answering the description of Bushby Meadow. They thought it was not improbable that there may have been formerly a division in the property, and that by a private agreement the rent charge was also divided between the owners of "Swager's Meadow," and

of "Bushby Meadow." There could be no doubt, however, that the former must be responsible for the whole, until it could be discovered where "Bushby Meadow" was situated.

In the "*Recent Inquiry*" (1855), no further discovery was made, with reference to this land. The Inspector recommended that the case be submitted to the Attorney-General.

BRIDGET MILLS'S CHARITY.

Bridget Mills, widow, by will, dated 20th September, 1751, directed that a sum of 100*l.* should be placed out at interest, during the lives of her nieces Bridget Hopkins, and Sarah Wright, to whom she bequeathed the interest during their lives. The said sum of 100*l.*, to be paid, after their decease, to the vicar and churchwardens of the parish church of Walsall, for the time being, upon trust, to be by them disposed of, so as to secure a yearly interest, not lessening the principal, but making the best advantage thereof; and upon further trust, to pay and distribute all such yearly interest, on every Christmas Day, in such proportions as they should think proper, amongst one hundred poor people of the borough of Walsall, whom the said vicar and churchwardens should think the fittest objects of charity.

According to the *Report of the Commissioners*, in 1823, this sum was secured by a mortgage, dated 16th February, 1770, on the tolls of the second district of the Walsall turnpike road, at five per cent interest; and the charity came into action on the death of Mrs. Wright, the survivor of the testatrix's two nieces. The interest was regularly paid to the vicar, who distributed it in accordance with the expressed will of the donor.

It appeared by the "*Recent Inquiry*," that the principal so invested, had within a late period been received by the trustees, and placed in the Walsall Branch of the Birmingham Banking Company.

KING'S CHARITY.

By an extract of will, without date, (which is the only account obtainable with respect to this charity), William King, bequeathed to his wife Margaret, his "three days' work of land, in *Long Cockettalls*, for her life, and, after her decease to be given to his poor neighbours of Great Bloxwich, for ever;" and he made the minister and churchwardens overseers of his will.

This land lies in Great Bloxwich, and according to the map and survey of the foreign, contains 2A. 2R. 28P. It is numbered on the map, 743. At the time of the *Charitable Commission*, in 1823, it was in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth Bunny, by whom it was underlet to one John Wilks.

From Mrs. Bunny's evidence on this occasion, it appeared that Mary Daniel, her aunt, held "Long Cockstalls" for her life, and that she first came in possession of same, by renting it of a person in Bloxwich. She had been dead many years, and was between seventy and eighty when she died. Upon her death, Mrs. Bunny came to the property, her aunt having left it to her by will. No will, however, could be found, nor did it appear that such had ever been acted upon. The rent, at this time, was 4*l.* per annum, and had been, a short time previous, 5*l.*

It was said that Mrs. Bunny, and her former husband, had laid out a great deal of money in improving the land.

Witness also deposed that, during the time she had had the property, she had given away, to the poor of Bloxwich, at different periods of the year, small sums, seldom exceeding a shilling at a time, amounting in all to about 2*l.* per annum. That her aunt had told her, previous to her death, if she (witness) would continue the dole—which, by Mr. King's will, amounted to 32*s.*—it was all that would be required of her. Her aunt had usually given away that amount in the month of August; but she (witness) had not confined the distribution to 32*s.*, having often given as much as 2*l.*

The Commissioners gave the following opinion:—

"As it appears to us that Mrs. Bunny had no right to the possession of this land, or to the distribution of the charity, we propose an arrangement, by which we trust it will be more correctly administered in future. By this arrangement, Mrs. Bunny, who is now upwards of sixty years old, is to pay 2*l.*, yearly, so long as she lives, as rent, to the minister and churchwardens, by whom it is to be disposed of according to the directions of the donor; the surplus rent being reserved by Mrs. Bunny, to repay the expenses which she and her former husband may have expended upon the land. And after Mrs. Bunny's death, the land is to be entirely at the disposal of the minister and churchwardens, and the whole rent distributed to the charity."

In the "*Recent Inquiry*," the following important facts were elicited:—That this land was, after the death of Peter Bunny, (who died in Bloxwich poor house), in the hands of John Hough,

who sold the possession to the late William Cotterill, town clerk. That he worked the mines, and afterwards sold the property to Mr. McBride, who still works the mines, but pays no dole.

The Inspector affirmed that the *entire estate* belonged to the charity, and said the case would at once be placed in the hands of the Attorney-General, for recovery.

ANONYMOUS CHARITY.

(RENT CHARGES ON JONES' FARM, LITTLE BLOXWICH.)

By the *Charitable Inquisition*, in 1823, it appeared that there was a rent charge on a farm at Little Bloxwich, belonging to Mr. Whitmore Jones, of the sum of 2*l.* 11*s.*, yearly, for the use of the poor of the foreign of Walsall. The origin of this payment could not be discovered. The title deeds of Mr. Jones made no mention of it, at least since 1779, when the property was purchased from Mr. Robert Barnard. This dole had been regularly received, and given away to the poor of the foreign, with other doles, till about 1820. The Commissioners state, in their report, that this non-payment arose from a dispute between the landlord and tenant, as to which of them should pay this rent charge. If the vestry clerk did not soon obtain payment from one or the other, they thought it would be advisable to take measures for the enforcing of same.

On the "Recent Inquiry," nothing further was elicited, than that the present owner of the land was Mr. William Jones, and that the tenant's name was Charles Beech.

The Inspector submitted the case for further investigation.

WHATELEY'S CHARITY.

Henry Whateley, by will, dated 21st August, 1799, gave to the vicar of Walsall, and two chapelwardens of the foreign, for the time being, the clear yearly sum of 6*l.*, charged upon two pieces of land, called "Coalpool Land," (between nine and ten acres) upon trust, to give on St. Thomas's Day 4*l.* 4*s.*, among such old and infirm parishioners in the foreign of Walsall, who should not receive pay from the overseers of the poor; and on further trust, to pay the officiating curate of Bloxwich 1*l.* 1*s.*, for preaching a sermon in Bloxwich chapel, yearly, on St. Thomas's Day. The remaining 15*s.* to be expended by the said vicar and chapelwardens, in regaling themselves after such distribution.

It appeared that the land consisted of two closes, numbering respectively, 588 and 589, on the map of the foreign, and containing together 8A. 3R. 21P., and that a great difficulty existed in complying strictly with the donor's directions, from the circumstance that, while he lived, he gave away a similar sum of money himself, without regard to the restriction mentioned in his will, and it had been since found difficult to alter the course of distribution.

ROBINSON'S CHARITY.

By will, dated 17th January, 1718, Richard Robinson, of Bushbury, gave and devised, out of the cottage and tenements, situate at Essington Wood, and also six little crofts adjacent thereto, (all of which he held in consideration of a payment of 30*l.*, under Henry Vernon, Esq., for the term of one thousand years, from 15th August, 1713), to the poor of Great and Little Bloxwich, *forty shillings*, yearly, to be distributed on St. Thomas's Day, and Good Friday; and also the like sum of *forty shillings*, to the poor of Essington, on the same days above-named. The distribution to be by the order and discretion of the churchwardens of Great and Little Bloxwich, and the overseers of the poor. And he further gave to his nephew, Samuel, after his wife's decease, *twenty shillings*, to be paid yearly, during his life, out of said cottage and premises.

The *Commissioners of Inquiry*, in 1823, report as follows:—

"The property consists of a house, and outbuildings, with about sixteen acres of land, at present in the possession of William Yates, whose wife's father purchased the lease, upwards of eighty years ago. William Yates now occupies the estate, which belongs to his wife and her two sisters. The title deeds have been examined, and the will of Richard Robinson is not amongst them.

"We could not obtain any evidence with respect to this charity, except a report that these doles were formerly paid. There has, however, certainly been no payment, in respect thereof, for at least seventy years, or since the land was purchased by the family now in possession."

A copy of Richard Robinson's will, which had since been discovered at Lichfield, was produced during the "*Recent Inquiry*," and the Inspector advised that the case should be submitted to the Attorney-General.

MOLESLEY'S DOLE.

(A VERY ANCIENT AND SINGULAR CHARITY.)

There are various traditions respecting the origin of this dole, one is, that a gentleman named Thomas Molesley, while once riding through Walsall, on "Twelfth eve," heard a child cry for bread, and, resolving that the like should never again happen, settled upon the town his manor of Bascotte, in Warwickshire, to provide annually one penny loaf for every individual within the liberties of the parish, same to be distributed on "Twelfth eve," for ever.

Dr. Plot, in his history of Staffordshire, affirms that one Thomas Molesley, by deed of feoffment, dated 30th Henry VI., granted his manor of Bascotte, for performing annually an obit for the souls of himself and his wife Margaret, in the church of Walsall, and in the abbey of Halesowen.

The deed specifies that the remainder of his lands and tenements were granted to the town of Walsall, but no mention is made of any dole. Whether the town originally paid the dole out of their portion of the rents is uncertain, but the first intimation of the custom is in 36th Henry VIII. (1539), when, "on the evening of the 'Twelfth eve,' the bellman summoned the people to repair to the church, to pray for the souls of Thomas Molesley, and Margaret his wife." A dole was given at this time, and 7*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.* discharged the demand.*

The first trace of it in the documents of the corporation, appears in 1632, when the amount paid away was 14*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* The distribution went on gradually increasing, till 1799, when it amounted to 60*l.*, at which sum, or thereabouts, it continued for some years.†

At the Reformation the custom was deemed superstitious, and the lands were seized by the Crown, where they lay till 28th of Queen Elizabeth. Plot observes "the town rented them, and so continued the dole."

Sir William Dugdale gives a different account of this gift. His version is, "one Thomas Molesley, of Moxhull, in the county of Warwick, lord of the manor of Bascotte, gave same on trust, A.D. 1452, to William Lyle and William Maggott, and their heirs,

* Plot's History of Staffordshire, c. 8, sec. 83 and 84.

+ Charity Commissioners' Report, A.D. 1823, p. 572.

for the use of the town of Walsall.* The same author traces down the succession of these estates, from the conquest till the year 1325, when it escheated to the king, by the attainder of Peter de Limesay, who was in the rebellion with the Earl of Lancaster, after which it came into the possession of Sir Ralph Rochford, Knight, from whom it passed, in 1403, to Thomas Seyvil, and in 1480, John Lee, of Warwick, conveyed same to Thomas Molesley." He also observes, "John Lyle, son of William Lyle, to whom these estates descended, in trust, for the use of the town of Walsall, instead of applying the produce thereof to such purpose, denied that the property was in trust, and pretended that it was his own inheritance. The inhabitants of Walsall, however, went to Moxhull, and drove away his cattle, which unjustifiable act he did not resent, because he was liable to be brought to account for this trust estate in his hands." A suit was commenced by the town against the said John Lyle, A.D. 1515; the result of which was, that the estates were adjudged to Richard Hurst, and John Ford, for the use of the town.

In 1726, a complaint was laid before a charity commission, against the corporation of Walsall, with respect to this dole. It was then declared, that the lands belonged to the corporation, and that the dole was only customary, and might be either continued or omitted as that body pleased.

About the year 1770, an attempt was made to withhold the payment, but an enraged populace clamorously forced its continuance.†

The following statistical argument against the claim of the corporation to these estates, and in favour of the parish, appears in the report of a committee, appointed at a vestry meeting, in 1804, to investigate the several charities:—

"It is observable, in further confirmation, that these estates cannot belong to the corporation, that the donations were in the 30th Henry VI. (1052), and 28th Elizabeth (1586), and the corporation's first charter was not granted till the 3rd Charles I. (1628), and the second charter, confirming the first, in the 13th Charles II. (1662); so that the original gift of these estates was made 176 years previous. The grant of Queen Elizabeth to Craddock and Shaw, in 1586, was 42 years before the first, and 76 years before the last charter, and no estates are therein mentioned; but, on the contrary, the

* Dugdale's History of Warwickshire, p. 347.

† Wilkes' MSS. in the Universal Magazine for January, 1788.

corporation are restrained, by an express clause, not to be possessed of more than 20*l.* per annum. It is, therefore, very certain to conclude that the estates belonged to the town, long before the corporation existed, and if that body had been possessed of any estates, they would, of course, have been included in the charities.”*

According to a publication by Joseph Cotterill, in 1818, the lands belonging to these estates comprised no less than 612*a.* 3*r.* 24*p.*, exclusive of a meadow formerly called “Styrch Meadow,” and land at Semely, and Knapton-on-the-Hill, &c., the measurement and situation of which, could not be defined.

Having so far arrived at the opinions entertained by various authorities, respecting the origin of this dole, as well as the conclusions formed on both sides, with regard to right of title to the estates, it may be well to turn to the *Commissioners' Report*, in 1823, and see what view of the case is there taken.

The report states that an annual payment called, “Molesley’s Dole,” was made by the corporation to the inhabitants of the parish of Walsall, and the adjoining parish of Rushall—which is supposed to have anciently formed part of that of Walsall—and that the distribution was intrusted to three persons (employed for the purpose), who commenced on New Year’s Day, and went through each parish, giving a penny to every inmate, of every house, whether permanently or accidentally therein; that there were different traditions respecting the origin of this dole, but that they (the commissioners), concurred in attributing it to one Thomas Molesley, from whom an estate at Bascotte, in Warwickshire, was derived, and which, being possessed by the corporation, amongst other causes, led to a suspicion that the whole estate, under the various grants thereof, was given in trust for charitable uses; such suspicion having been strengthened by the finding of a jury under a commission of inquiry, A.D. 1726. They (the commissioners), however, after a careful inspection of numerous documents, in the possession of the corporation, were induced to believe that this estate was not subject either to the payment of the dole in question, or any other charitable uses.

After citing various indentures, the report thus concludes:—

* Report of Parish Committee, p. 34.

"It does not appear to us that these documents afford any satisfactory inference, that this property was granted by Queen Elizabeth to charitable uses; no such purpose is expressed in the grant itself. The corporation appear to have always exercised the management of the property, and the administration of its revenue. The dole, which was paid from it before the grant from the crown, and which the corporation have continued since, seems to have originated in a voluntary appropriation of part of the income, and not in any condition of either of the original grants, by which the property was acquired; and if they have applied other portions of the income in works of charity, or public utility, it does not appear to us that this must be construed to be anything more than a voluntary application of the corporation property, or as amounting to a proof that it was granted for charitable uses. The circumstance that in two of the above-mentioned conveyances, viz., those of 1708 and 1759, the grantors are styled 'trustees of the lands and revenues belonging to the town of Walsall,' does not itself seem sufficient to impeach the title of the corporation, or to impart more than this was the public property of the corporation, who are the governing body of the town.

"With respect to the dole itself, it appears to us to be at the present day a very useless mode of employing a large sum of money, which, in other ways, might be made productive of considerable benefit. Believing it, therefore, to be, though a very ancient, yet a voluntary, and, therefore, a revocable payment, we think it is strongly to be recommended to the corporation, to substitute for it, some other mode of application, which might render the fund really beneficial."

Recent Inquiry (1855).

Mr. Joseph Green James called the attention of the Inspector to this estate, which had hitherto been held by the corporation, and its rental added to the corporate funds.

The Mayor remarked that every year up to 1825, a penny was paid to each inhabitant of Walsall and Rushall, and he remembered that when he was a boy, the day of its distribution was a great day among the juveniles, and dealers in sweetmeats. A man went round with a bag of copper, and having ascertained the number of persons in each house, left as many pence. The charity commissioners naturally considered this mode of expending a part of the funds of the estate a very useless one, and recommended that the corporation should devise some other method of expenditure, more truly of a charitable nature. In consequence of that recommendation, in 1825 the corporation erected eleven almshouses, for necessitous widows, one for Rushall, five for the foreign of Walsall, and five for the borough. Each of the occupants received 2s. per week, which was paid out of the general borough funds.

It was further stated that the rent of the Bascotte estate, in connection with which, this "Molesley's Dole" was paid before the erection of the almshouses, amounted to 236*l.* 5*s.*, more than thrice as much as the expenditure on the almshouses. The former charity commissioners had considered the question whether this estate was properly vested in the corporation, or whether it ought entirely to be devoted to charitable uses, and they came to the conclusion that the dole was a voluntary payment on the part of the corporation, and that the estate always appeared to have been corporate property.

Mr. James contended that the property ought to be entirely devoted to charitable purposes, and said he was prepared to produce evidence in support of that view. A jury, in 1726, had found that the estate was chargeable with the repair of a bridge, over the Tame, which was a charitable use. He hoped the Inspector would not consider himself bound by the report of the former commissioners.

In the course of conversation it transpired that Mr. Blunt, then an eminent barrister, had been consulted by Mr. James, with respect to this question. The Inspector asked to see the opinion he had given, and it was found to be in favour of the corporation; but Mr. James said that he had since discovered stronger evidence on the other side.

The Mayor and Town Clerk both expressed opinions contrary to that of Mr. James, the former quoting from an old document, a statement to the effect that this property, being left to the corporation, they, in gratitude to the donor, gave the dole to all who would, on a certain day, pray for his soul. One old report, dated 1659, stated that the estate could be traced from the conquest.

The Inspector, having gone carefully over the documentary evidence, appeared inclined to think that the whole estate ought to be appropriated to purposes of a strictly charitable nature.

The Mayor said he believed if the borough were polled, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand would vote for its remaining as it did at present; a more useful appropriation, he thought, it would be difficult to find.

The Inspector observed, that no doubt a flourishing place like Walsall, would be paved and lighted without any benefactions, and

if this estate was intended for charitable purposes, it should be so devoted. He intimated that no advantage would be obtained by going back beyond the grant from the Crown, in the reign of Elizabeth.

Mr. Wilkinson, in reply to a question by the Inspector, said that the payment of one penny to persons of every class could hardly be considered a charitable use, but that the jury, in 1726, had found that the estate was liable for the repair of a bridge, over the Tame, which was legally a charitable purpose.

Mr. Stubbs observed that this finding was a mistake. The Bascotte estate, which was in Warwickshire, had no connection with the repair of the bridge. A piece of land adjoining was made over to the corporation, on condition of their keeping this bridge in repair, but this was entirely distinct from the Bascotte estate. On searching the corporate chest, a deed was found which established this.

The Inspector expressed his surprise that an answer to that objection, which appeared so satisfactory, was never before given..

CHARITIES OF THOMAS WOLLASTON, JOHN WOLLASTON, AND JOHN WOLLASTON, JUNIOR.

In an account of the charities of Walsall, compiled in the year 1729, by Samuel Cradock, it is stated:—

"*Mr. Thomas Wollaston, appointed by his will, that his son and heirs should, yearly, distribute the rent of a small house, on the side of the hill, near the churchyard (the lord's rent of one shilling being deducted), as followeth, viz:—to the four poor people of the almshouse 2s., on the eve of our Saviour's Nativity, and the residue to such poor inhabitants of the borough as they should think fit, on Good Friday, for ever.*

"He further appointed that the rent of 10s. a-year, arising from a cottage at the Town's-end, during a lease of ninety-nine years, should be distributed to thirty poor widows of the borough, on the feast day of St John the Baptist.

"It also appeared, by a table of benefactions in the church, that *Mr. John Wollaston, by his will, afterwards confirmed the above bequests; and appointed, in addition, that his heirs, for ever, should maintain and keep in repair a house in Hall Lane, and allow some poor body to dwell therein rent free.*

"There is no date to this bequest, but as the entry is in the body of the table, and a notice immediately follows of a donation in 1648, it is probable that this John Wollaston was the son of Thomas Wollaston aforesaid, and the father of the John Wollaston whose will will is next given, and which seems to recognise the two several wills and bequests above-named,

“John Wollaston, of Walsall, by will, dated 3rd October, 1670, gave to his daughter Beatrice, her heirs and assigns, a little croft called ‘Bottrel Croft,’ a meadow-piece in Wisemore Fields; and a close called ‘Stone Pit Leasow.’ The said Beatrice to pay upon every Good Friday, to the poor of Walsall borongh, for ever, the sum of 40s., according to the devise of Michael Shawe, deceased, as well as the other bequests.

“He further gave the rent of his house, in Walsall, in the tenure of Edward Spink, to be yearly distributed to the poor of the borough, on Good Friday, at the discretion of his heirs.”

The *Commissioners*, in their *Report* of 1823, observe:—

“The sum of 40s., charged by Michael Shawe, as stated in the first part of this will, is regularly paid. We cannot, however, trace any other property derivable from Thomas Wollaston, or either of the John Wollastons.

“The parish committee, in 1804, found that John Wollaston, by will, gave a house in Hall Lane to the poor, which they state to be then occupied by Robert Clinton, at 4l. 4s. per annum. And they further found that he gave the rent of a house in the churchyard to the poor of the almshouse, which house they believed to be then occupied by one Sarah Birt. The committee appear to have taken into consideration only the will of the first John Wollaston, as recorded on the table of benefactions; or, perhaps they may have considered the two inscriptions as relating to one and the same testator. However this may be, we conceive that they mistake in supposing that the house in Hall Lane was given by either of the John Wollastons. It appears to us that this property was derived from Blanche Wollaston, widow of the last John Wollaston, the rents being carried regularly to the account of her charity.”

In the “*Recent Inquiry*,” the Inspector gave his opinion, with respect to these charities, thus:—“I do not find that any sums are received on account of these charities, and the property, if any, is comprised in the estate of Blanche Wollaston.”

CHARITIES IRRECOVERABLY LOST.

JOHN PERSEHOUSE'S CHARITY.

By the inquisition of 5th September, 22nd Charles II., it was found that John Persehouse, of Reynold's Hall, by his will, bearing date 3rd March, 1636, devised that there should be an almshouse founded, and made, of a small house, and two shops under the same, situate near the churchyard of Walsall, for the accommodation of three poor men, and as many poor women, of the borough and foreign of Walsall, during their lives; same to be

nominated by the vicar and overseers, with the advice of the mayor. And further, that forty shillings, yearly, should be paid out of the rents of a close in Walsall Park, half of such sum to be distributed to the poor of the foreign and borough, on Good Friday, and the other half on the Friday before Christmas; also, an additional sum of 3s. 4d., to be paid out of the rents and profits thereof, to each of the inmates of said almshouse, by even proportions, at the times aforesaid. In 1636, the said house and shops were converted into an almshouse, but on the 25th December, 1668, there was an arrear of said payment of forty shillings per annum, due for eight years.

About the year 1798, these houses were considered a nuisance to the churchyard, and, by order of the churchwardens, were taken down, and the inmates were removed to "Harper's Almshouses." A market house (also since removed), was built on the site of these premises.

The *Commissioners*, in their *Inquiry* of 1823, found that they could not learn whether the yearly payments of 3s. 4d. each, were continued to the inmates of the almshouses, as directed, neither could they find proof of the rent charge of forty shillings to the poor of the borough and foreign having been paid, since the date of the former inquisition, nor was the land known on which it was charged.

The Inspector (on the "*Recent Inquiry*,") pronounced this charity as lost.

HUMPHREY PERSEHOUSE'S CHARITY.

By will, dated 11th February, 1697, Humphrey Persehouse, gentleman, gave to the poor of Walsall 5*l.* yearly for ever, viz., 2*l.* to the borough and 3*l.* to the foreign, to be paid every Christmas day, by the vicar and churchwardens.

In an old document, produced to the Commissioners, in 1823, but without date or signature, or any other authentication, endorsed on the back, "Doles now received and paid by the Forrin," among other items appeared the following:—

	£ s. d.
Humphrey Persehouse's dole, paid by Stubbs or Crutchley	2 16 0
Humphrey Persehouse's dole	... ... ... 2 17 0

The Commissioners stated that they were unable to obtain any other trace of this benefaction.

During the "*Recent Inquiry*," Mr. Wilkinson (town clerk), read an extract from the will of Humphrey Persehouse. There was nothing to show whether the amount was charged on any, or what land.

The Inspector observed that this charity might be regarded as lost.

REDWARE'S CHARITY.

According to an inscription on an old benefaction table, William Redware gave a pasture in Essington, called "Priest Croft," to feoffees, to pay to the poor, impotent, and aged, of Great and Little Bloxwich, upon every Good Friday, yearly, for ever, six shillings and eight-pence; to the inmates of the almshouse, two shillings; and to the poor of Essington, sixpence.

No trace of the land mentioned in this inscription, or a single payment on account of this charity, could be discovered.

JOHN AND ALICE BOLTON'S CHARITY.

By the inquisition of the 5th September, 22nd Charles II., it was found that "John Bolton, and Alice his wife, being seizen in fee of certain lands called 'Pitty Fields,' did by their indenture, bearing date 1st May, 6th James I., grant the sum of ten shillings, yearly, issuing out of said land, to be paid on Good Friday, for ever, to and for the use of the poor of the parish of Walsall;" and also that the said lands had come to the possession successively, of John Burns, Richard Persehouse, and John Persehouse, by whom the ten shillings had been respectively paid till the year 1661, when the said John Persehouse refused to pay the same.

The Commissioners, in 1823, state as follows:—

"There is a piece of land, generally known by the name of 'Pitty Piece,' near the Town's-end, the property of Lord Bradford, but we have not been able to identify it with the land mentioned in the inquisition, as liable to the above payment. We understand that the application of Pitty Field is not uncommon in a coal country, where pits have been opened."

During the "*Recent Inquiry*," the Inspector expressed a similar opinion, viz., "all trace of the identity of the lands on which this charge of ten shillings was made, seems to be altogether lost."

CICELY HAYNES'S CHARITY.

According to an inscription on an old tablet in the church, Cicely Haynes, widow, by her will, dated 11th March, 1648, gave

ten shillings a-year, out of a close in Wolverhampton, called "Chapel Leasow," to be distributed on St. Andrew's Day, to thirty poor widows of Walsall borough, and to be paid by John Walton and his heirs, after the decease of her brother Thomas Hawes.

By the Commissioners' Report on the charities of Wolverhampton, in 1823, it appears that on a tablet in the church of that parish also, was inscribed:—

"Mrs. Cicely Haynes left twenty shillings a-year to the poor of Wolverhampton and Walsall, to be equally divided on St. Andrew's Day, among sixty poor widows, viz., thirty in each town."

The Report goes on to state:—

"Several doles, of which this is one, were at one time paid by the late John Lewis Petit, M.D., to the poor of Wolverhampton, as charges upon his estates in that town; and upon division of his property between his two sons, the doles were apportioned between them. In a memorandum at the end of Dr. Petit's 'Receiver's Book,' 'Haynes's Dole' is specified as payable in such manner, and on the day already named; but there is nothing in any of the family documents to show on what lands it is charged, or that it is charged on any. In the dole book it is stated to have been paid out of a piece of land called '*Butt's Pit*'. There is a piece of land near Wolverhampton so called, and now the property of L. Petit, Esq., but we have found no further evidence to connect it with this dole."*

"Recent Inquiry."—Opinion of the Inspector:—"Nothing more is known of this charity than appears in the report of the commissioners of inquiry, in 1823. The charity must be regarded as lost."

HARRIS'S GIFT TO THE ORGANIST OF WALSALL CHURCH.

The particulars of this charity, the funds of which have been entirely swallowed up by law, will be found under the inquiry into the "Bentley Hay Charity."†

MURRAY'S CHARITY.

Samuel Murray, (according to an old benefaction table in the church), left eight shillings per annum, to be distributed to sixteen poor men of the foreign of Walsall, at Christmas. The vicar for the time being was appointed trustee.

Nothing could be learned further of this charity. It has been lost many years.

* Many a man has been hanged on less circumstantial evidence.

† Page 173.

SUMMARY OF THE CHARITIES.

		TO THE PARISH OF WALSALL.	Income in 1823.
		£ s. d.	
BLUE COAT SCHOOL.	Interest on 200 <i>l.</i> , left by John Whittingham	10 0 0	
	Land near Dudley, left by John Taylor	4 4 0	
	Interest on 300 <i>l.</i> , left by Mrs. Crump, in 1840.		
	Interest on 200 <i>l.</i> , left by Mrs. Curteys, in 1149.		
	Interest on 50 <i>l.</i> , given by F. B. Oerton, in 1854.		
BOLTON'S, JOHN AND ALICE.	Rent-charge on lands, called "Pitty Pieces," of	0 10 0	
DISSENTERS' SUNDAY SCHOOL.	Land at the Windmill	12 0 0	
	Increased since to £25.		
FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.	Estates and moneys	778 3 0	
	Increased since to £27 <i>s.</i>		
FISHLEY.	Estates	56 0 0	
GORWAY'S, THOMAS	Rent-charge on lands in Rushall and Bromwich, of	2 0 0	
HARPER'S, JOHN, ALMHOUSES.	Estates	42 15 6	
HAWLE'S, John.	Rent-charge on lands, called Molefields, of... Query whether the whole rents are not applicable to the charity.	5 0 0	
MOLESLEY'S DOLE.	Formerly "The Penny Dole," now corporation almshouses, present annual charge 67 <i>l. 12s.</i>		
ORGANIST, OR HARRIS' GIFT OF £4.	Lost by suit in Chancery.		
PARKER'S, JOHN.	Rent-charge out of Langthorne, in Yorkshire.	10 0 0	
PARKER'S, NICHOLAS.	Rent-charge, out of land at Little Bloxwich, messuage in Rushall, meadow in Rushall, land in Aldridge, and lands in Chapel Field, in Woodhall-field, and Cornwell Field, in Great Bloxwich, of	4 0 0	
PARKER'S, ROBERT.	Interest on 400 <i>l.</i> , to Merchant Tailors' Company ...	20 0 0	
PERSEHOUSE'S, JOHN.	Lost.		
PERSEHOUSE'S, HUM.	5 <i>l.</i> yearly. Lost.		
STONE'S, HENRY, (THE ELDER.)	Rent-charge out of lands at Castle Bromwich, and Yardley, Coal-pool, Bloxwich, and Lower Pannels, Walsall ...	34 14 0	
WHEATE'S WILLIAM.	Rent of two closes of land, at Five-Lanes-End, near Wood-end.	8 0 0	

TO THE BOROUGH OF WALSALL. Income in 1823.

		£ s. d.
BENTLEY HAY.	Income from lands, &c., at Bloxwich	... 20 0 0
CURTEY'S, JOHN.	Rent-charge, out of Swager's Meadow, and Bushby Meadow	... ... ... 1 6 8
DEE'S, JOHN.	Income of land at Wood-end, called Slinge Meadow	... ... ... 2 0 0
	Query, the whole rent is liable.	
HINTON'S, ROGER.	Proportion of rents from an estate at Rickers- coate, near Stafford	... ... ... 23 18 11
HAYNES'S, CICELY.	Rent-charge out of a close in Wolverhampton, called Chapel Leasow, of	... ... 0 10 0
MILLS'S, BRIDGET.	Interest on 100 <i>l.</i> , on Mortgage of Tolls of the second District of Walsall Turnpike Roads, (since paid off)	... ... 5 0 0
SYVERN'S, WILLIAM.	Charged on Freehold houses, in Horseshoe Yard, St. Martin's Lane, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, belonging to Thos. Bower	... ... 5 0 0
SHAWE'S, MICHAEL.	Rent-charge on land at Walsall Town's-end, of	2 0 0
STONE'S, RICHARD, (OF WALSALL.)	Rent-charge out of Park Brook Leasow, at Bentley, of	... ... 2 6 0
STONE'S, HENRY, (THE YOUNGER.)	Rent-charge of	... ... 5 0 0
STONE'S, RICHARD, (OF CALDMORE.)	Rent-charge out of Palfrey Green Leasow, now belonging to Peter Cotterill, of	... 0 6 8
	This has not been paid for many years.	
WEBBE'S, THOMAS.	Rent-charge out of Cow Leasow, in Shel- field, of	... ... ... 1 0 0
WOLLASTON'S BLANCH.	Income from houses and lands	... ... 62 10 0
WOLLASTON'S, THOS, JOHN (THE ELDER), & JOHN (THE YOUNGER).	Also moneys since invested in the funds. These charities became amalgamated with that of Blanch Wollaston's	
WILOX'S, JOHN.	Rent-charge out of a piece of land in Darlaston, called Radley Gutter Field, of	... ... 0 16 0
	Sold in 1844, and produce invested	

TO THE FOREIGN OF WALSALL.

ANONYMOUS.	Rent-charge out of a farm at Little Bloxwich belonging to Whitmore Jones, of	... 2 11 0
KING'S, WILLIAM.	Three days' work of Land in Long Cockstalls, Great Bloxwich	... ... ... 2 0 0

Sold by the late William Cotterill, to Mr. McBride.
The entire estate belongs to the charity.

Income in 1828.
£ s d.

MURRAY'S, SAMUEL. 8*l.* yearly. Lost.

PARKER'S, WILLIAM. Investment of 400*l.* to Merchant Tailors' Company 20 0 0

PARKER'S, ROBERT. Lands at Great Bloxwich and Essington Wood. 24 0 0
Mine Royalties besides.

ROBINSON'S, RICHARD. Rent-charge of 2 0 0
No payment has been made for many years.

REDWARE'S, WILLIAM. Rent-charge of 10*s.* Lost.

WHATELEY'S, HENRY. Rent-charge out of two pieces of land, called
"Coal-pool Land," of 6 0 0

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

WALSALL:
ORIGIN OF NAME,
PAGE 2.

It is well known that the religious rites of the Druids were solemnized in forests, and it is quite evident from ancient records, and traces still in existence, that a great portion of the town and neighbourhood of Walsall was not only formerly covered with wood to a considerable extent, but also, that Druidical fires once blazed on the adjacent common of Barr Beacon. The name of Walsall appears to have had its origin from these local circumstances: — *Wal* from the Saxon *Weald*, which signifies a wood or forest, and *al* or *hal*, a hall or palace, from the Saxon *Heale*. It is quite clear that the neighbouring town of *Wednesbury* (or *Wedgebury*, as it is vulgarly termed), was anciently called *Wodensborough* or *Woden's-town*, from the Saxon god of battle *Woden*, who was universally worshipped in Woods. This leads to the supposition (of which there is but little doubt), that there was once a temple in the vicinity, dedicated to that deity.

**ANTIQUITY
OF
WALSALL,** PAGE 3.

It is stated by several authorities, that in or about the year 916, Walsall was fortified by the celebrated Princess Ethelfleda, who governed the kingdom of Mercia, which was the sixth of the Saxon principalities founded in Britain, and comprised the whole of the midland counties.

**THE BEAR AND
RAGGED STAFF, AS
THE WALSALL ARMS,**
PAGE 9.

The Bear and Ragged Staff was a badge, worn by Henry, the Great Earl of Warwick, surnamed "the King-maker," who was lord of the manor of Walsall,— hence its adoption as the "Walsall Coat of Arms." It is, however, only used by the corporation as a device, being quite distinct from the arms on the corporate seal.

**COURTS OF
"PIE-POUDRE,"**
PAGE 8.

A Court of "Pye-Powder," or "Pie-Poudre," was a Summary Common Law Court, where suitors could resort with their "dusty feet" (as the term implies), to have immediate redress for their wrongs, and the offenders receive a speedy punishment. The term is derived from the French *pied* (foot), and *poudreux* (dusty).

VIEW OF
FRANKPLEDGE,
PAGE 8.

"Frankpledge," in Saxon times, was a surety given by the lord of the manor, to the government of the country, for the peace of his district, and the good behaviour of his tenants, retainers, and servants. He held his courts periodically, for the trial of offences committed within his jurisdiction, as he was responsible to the crown for their prevention, or punishment. Hence his court was denominated the "View of Frankpledge."

REBUILDING OF
WALSALL
PARISH CHURCH,
PAGE 20.

(FROM THE PARISH BOOK.)
An account of money expended in the rebuilding of Walsall Parish Church, together with an account showing by what means the same was raised. September 1st, 1824.

EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Cash paid to the contractors... ...	10761	10	1
Granted the contractors an annuity of 500 <i>l.</i> per annum for nine years, the payment to commence Sept., 1828, without interest... ...	4500	0	0
Cash paid for extra work, not included in contract	717	7	0
Cash paid to architect	1080	0	0
Cash paid to the clerk of the works ...	227	9	1
	<hr/>		
	£ 17286	6	6

EXCISEPTS.	£	s.	d.
Borrowed on church rates, at five per cent. interest	3400	0	0
Borrowed from His Majesty's "Commissi- oners for building new churches," &c... ...	2000	0	0
Granted the contractors an annuity of 500 <i>l.</i> per annum, from September, 1828 ...	4500	0	0
Brief, (first payment)...	43	9	2
By sale of pews;	1175	0	0
By Subscriptions	2965	2	1
By grant from "Society for rebuilding churches, &c."	2000	0	0
By sale of lead	484	17	0
By drawback of duty on materials used in rebuilding church	717	18	3
	<hr/>		
	£ 17286	6	6

* Some persons entertain the idea that the purchaser of a pew can sell, or otherwise dispose of same, as he may think proper, such, however, is an erroneous conclusion. The original indenture of sale—endorsed "Sale of pews, in what right, and for what use"—expressly recites after each purchaser's name:—"For the use of himself and family, so long as they shall continue inhabitants of the parish of Walsall."

**ANCIENT PILLAR
IN BLOXWICH
CHURCHYARD,
PAGE 76.**

Such columns were erected about the seventh century as trophies of victory, and were subsequently placed in streets where proclamations were made, and the bearers of a corpse rested in their progress to the church. Also, in Market Places, to serve as a restraint to covetousness; in the highways, to prevent robbery, by the influence of religious feeling; and in the fields, as land marks. It is recorded by Dr. Oliver and other historians, that in primitive times, the south side of every churchyard contained a column, placed on a basement, or pedestal, having on its summit a cross, and the nearer to this cross a corpse was interred, so much the sooner, it was believed, would the soul be released from purgatory. Hence the reason why the south side of a churchyard most frequently contains the greatest number of interments, individuals having a solemn dread of being buried in the north, where there was no cross. So far did primitive Christians carry their devotion for this figure, that they have been accused (and no doubt with some degree of justice) of worshiping the cross itself.

It is well known that, prior to the Reformation, the sign of the cross was used by the superstitious as a charm against sorcery, and for the purpose of driving away evil spirits. It must, however, also be confessed, that at, and since that period, blind zeal in many instances exceeded prudence, and that men ran into the opposite extreme, making the cross an object of horror and contempt. On this subject Flecknoe quaintly observes:—"That had they their will, a bird should not fly in the air with its wings *a-cross*, a ship with its *cross-yard* sail upon the sea, nor profane tailor sit *cross-legged* upon his shop-board, or have *cross-bottoms* to wind his thread upon."

With reference to the particular pillar in question, no records exist which might contribute their aid towards determining its origin, and tradition is also equally silent. It must, therefore, remain a subject for the speculations of the theoretical antiquary.

**ADVOWSON OF
BLOXWICH CHURCH;
PAGE 76.**

The right of presentation to the living is claimed by the inhabitants of Bloxwich, who have repeatedly exercised this privilege; it is also claimed by the vicar of Walsall, and the Merchant Tailors' Company. The last appointment was made by the bishop of the diocese, by lapse; the preceding one, by the inhabitants of the place.

THE END.

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